
UNITED NATIONS ASIAN MEETING ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Hanoi
1 to 3 March 2000

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Asian Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held in Hanoi from 1 to 3 March 2000, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 54/39 and 54/40 of 1 December 1999. The theme of the Asian Meeting was "Achieving the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people – a key to peace in the Middle East".

2. The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee, who acted as Chairman of the Meeting; Walter Balzan (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee, who acted as Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Meeting; Pham Binh Minh (Viet Nam) and Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

3. The Asian Meeting consisted of an opening session, four plenary meetings, an NGO workshop and a closing session. Plenary I focused on the peace process and Palestinian statehood, plenary II considered issues related to the United Nations and the question of Palestine, plenary III drew on the international support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and plenary IV highlighted the role of parliaments in achieving the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

4. Presentations were made by 20 experts from Asia and other regions, including Palestinians and Israelis. Each plenary meeting included a discussion period open to all participants. Representatives of 51 Governments, Palestine, 2 intergovernmental organizations, 5 United Nations bodies and agencies and 9 non-governmental organizations, as well as special guests of the host country and representatives of the media, universities and institutes, including a group of students, attended the Asian Meeting.

5. The main points of the discussion were highlighted in the final document of the Asian Meeting, the Hanoi Declaration (annex I).

II. Opening statements

6. The opening session was addressed by **Chu Tuan Nha**, Minister for Science, Technology and Environment of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. He emphasized that at the threshold of the new millennium, humanity's most important task was to intensify cooperation and strive to prevent the outbreak of new wars while searching for the solution to ongoing conflicts, including the conflict in the Middle East with the Palestinian question as its core. That conflict has been the most protracted one in modern history. The international community, the League of Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and others had taken numerous initiatives to end the state of war and promote a lasting peace in the Middle East. It was regrettable that the outcomes of those initiatives had for a long time fallen short of expectations.
7. As a nation which had made untold sacrifices and endured hardship for more than 30 years in its struggle for national independence and reunification, the people of Viet Nam understood and shared the misfortunes and difficulties of the Palestinian people in its struggle for legitimate national rights and the future of its nation. The Government and people of Viet Nam fully support the Palestinian people's struggle for the right to self-determination and the right to establish an independent Palestinian state in its homeland. A genuine and lasting peace in the Middle East could only be achieved through a candid and honest dialogue with full respect for the interests of all parties concerned. The Jewish people, more than anyone else, should understand the suffering of displaced people deprived of their fatherland. This painful history should not repeat itself for the Palestinian people. As new prospects for a solution to the Middle East issue had opened up, the United Nations should play a more active role not only as a peacekeeper but also as a peacemaker.
8. A message from the **Secretary-General of the United Nations** was read out by his representative, Adrianus Mooy, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. In his message, the Secretary-General pointed out that the Middle East peace process was in a critical phase with both sides in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations embarked on permanent status talks. Although the target date for reaching the framework agreement had been missed, it was the Secretary-General's fervent hope that the parties would work to overcome the obstacles at hand. The continued construction and expansion of settlements and roads would have a serious impact on the outcome of the permanent status negotiations. He appealed to the parties to exercise restraint and build instead on the achievements of the peace process. He stressed that any viable peace agreement would also require an improvement in the social and economic situation of the Palestinian people, an issue the United Nations remained fully engaged in.
9. The Secretary-General expressed the hope that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which had been providing humanitarian assistance, education and health care to more than 3 million Palestine refugees for a half a century, would receive the financial resources it needed to continue its mission. To ensure that United Nations support for the peace process was well prepared and coordinated, and to make the assistance provided by the United Nations more effective and more focused, the Secretary-General had appointed Terje Rød-Larsen of Norway as Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and as his Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority. All parties in the peace process were urged to reinvigorate their efforts in the critical transitional period ahead to move the peace process forward towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).
10. **Ibra Deguène Ka**, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, expressed his satisfaction for the opportunity to have this meeting in Asia which provided the occasion to share the experiences of Asian States in the struggle for national independence and sovereignty, as well as in efforts for economic independence, sustainable development and regional and international economic cooperation. The experience of Viet Nam and the other Asian countries could provide valuable insight and inspiration for the Palestinian people, who have yet to fulfil their own aspirations for sovereignty and independence after 33 years of occupation and deprivation. His Committee was charged with the mission of assisting the Palestinian people in promoting a peaceful settlement based on the exercise of its inalienable rights, which were central to the establishment of a lasting peace in the Middle East.
11. He recalled a number of positive developments in the peace process, but stressed also that delays by the Israeli side in implementing points already agreed upon only exacerbated long-standing feelings of frustration and despair on the Palestinian side. Regrettably the peace process had been plagued by all sorts of political, legal and procedural problems, with many still to be encountered. He cautioned that ideas being floated by some high-level Israeli officials on the outcome of permanent settlement negotiations, such as keeping a number of Israeli settlements, annexing part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, controlling the borderline with both Jordan and Egypt as well as positions contrary to United Nations resolutions related to Jerusalem and Palestine refugees, were counterproductive. Such moves were seen as an effort to reshape the thinking of the international community on the terms of an acceptable final agreement and diminish Palestinian expectations on the outcome of the peace negotiations. He expressed confidence that the Meeting would further advance the peace process and the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of its own independent State.
12. **Suleiman Alnabbab**, Member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Special Envoy of Yasser Arafat, thanked the Government and the people of Viet Nam for providing a venue for the Asian Meeting on the Question of Palestine. He expressed admiration for the success of the Vietnamese people in rebuilding its country and society. The struggle of the Vietnamese people had a special meaning and respect in the hearts of the Palestinian people as it continued to inspire confidence and patience in its own struggle to liberate the Occupied Territory and achieve national independence. He expressed once again full solidarity with the Lebanese people and condemned the escalation by Israel of the warfare against that Arab nation. He expressed support for the Lebanese national resistance which exercised its right to fight for an end to foreign invasion, as had in the past the American, French, Vietnamese and many other peoples.
13. He expressed full solidarity with Syrian negotiating efforts to end the Israeli occupation of Syrian territory. The Palestinian people, who were fighting the same cause, i.e. the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation army from all Occupied Territory, including Jerusalem, considered that any success in applying resolution 242 (1967) would set a precedent of real importance and would support and consolidate the attitude of the Palestinian people while it aimed to end the Israeli occupation and Israeli settlements on Palestinian territory. Peace was not in the interest of Palestinians only; it was an Israeli interest as well. Applying international and United Nations resolutions was the only way to achieve peace and security for all the peoples, Arabs and Israelis, in the region.
14. Statements were also made by the representatives of some Governments. The representative of **Japan** said his Government was determined to play a political role in the Middle East peace process as well as continue its social and economic support to the Palestinian people. Before any final status could be decided, however, the Palestinian people would have to achieve substantial economic and social development. Japan was the largest single country donor to the Palestinian people and had already disbursed more than US\$ 500 million. The representative of **Brazil** emphasized the need to respect the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Brazil had traditionally supported all United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and supported also the Madrid peace process as well as the Oslo and subsequent accords. The representative of **Cuba** deplored that the realities in the Middle East fell short of the expectations. He said that at this delicate and yet decisive moment in the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, it was of great importance to encourage the involvement of the international community in the peace process.
15. The representative of **Indonesia** said it was now up to Israel to scrupulously implement in letter and spirit the various agreements reached with the Palestinians and resolve questions of the transitional period relating to the boundaries, refugees, Palestinian prisoners as well as the effective establishment of the

Gaza seaport. Equally important was meeting the deadline of the year 2000 for completion of the final status negotiations. The representative of **Tunisia** affirmed continued support of the Palestinian people and called for a new era of cooperation and understanding among countries. War and colonization should no longer impede peace and stability in the region. The representative of **China** pointed out that the international community had a duty and a responsibility to render more support and assist the Palestinian people in developing its economy. Only when the question of Palestine was resolved in a just and reasonable fashion, with rights restored and an independent State established, could lasting peace be achieved. As a permanent member of the Security Council, China would join forces with other Asian countries so that the question of Palestine could be resolved in a just and fair fashion.

16. The representative of **Egypt** drew attention to the question of Palestinian refugees, which was one of the oldest problems in the contemporary world. Four million Palestinian refugees were living in exile and in refugee camps, and deprived of their legitimate rights to return to their land. As an occupying power, Israel continued to see itself as standing above all international laws or treaties, even those to which it was a party. The time had come for the international community to adopt a resolute stance against Israeli practices and force it to face up to its responsibilities. The representative of **Turkey** emphasized the need for an atmosphere of confidence to be created in the Middle East. This would require adherence to previous commitments made at Wye and Sharm El-Sheikh. He expressed hope that the negotiations on all tracks would resume soon. He stressed that the question of Palestine was at the core of the Middle East conflict and that the Israeli-Palestinian track should not be sidestepped as a result of other peace initiatives. Turkey stood ready to support the peace process and to make its own contribution to its multilateral track.

III. Plenary sessions

Plenary session I

The peace process and Palestinian statehood

17. Speakers in the plenary examined the status of the peace process and international efforts towards the realization by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the correlation of Palestinian statehood and achieving peace in the region.

18. **Suleiman Alnajjab**, Member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Special Envoy of Yasser Arafat, delivered the keynote address. He criticized Israel for not implementing the signed agreements, in particular, the redeployment of the Israeli army from parts of the occupied territory. Israel considered the Occupied Palestinian Territory as disputed land and not as occupied, it suffocated East Jerusalem by not allowing Arab development and it exerted permanent pressure on the Palestinian leadership by insisting on the four no's laid out at the outset of Mr. Barak's tenure. Israel refused to discuss the issue of East Jerusalem in the negotiations, vowed to annex to Israel all settlements in the West Bank and transferred to Palestinian control only small pieces of land, thus not allowing the Palestinian Authority to control a viable territory. The continued expansion of Israeli settlements demonstrated that there was no difference to the policies of the previous Government of Mr. Netanyahu.

19. He continued by saying that the Palestinian leadership was committed to the peace process in the Middle East. This pledge would guarantee the security and well-being of all States and peoples of the region – Israeli and Arab alike. The Palestinian people had refused to capitulate to the dictates of the Israeli Government. It was more united than ever on the main goals of ridding itself of the Israeli occupation, establishing an independent Palestinian State and solving the Palestinian refugee problem. He declared that the right to self-determination for the Palestinian people was an intrinsic, natural right that could not be the subject of any negotiation by Israel or any other partner. He called for the upgrading of the status of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to enable its full participation in the upcoming United Nations Millennium Summit scheduled for September this year. He also asked that the Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention be reconvened to reassess the Palestinian situation and take measures against Israel for violating that Convention.

20. **Sari Nusseibeh**, President, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem, said that the Palestinians had been prodded by the Israelis and the Americans to adopt a negotiating approach of signing a series of interim agreements, leaving a final agreement to the end. The initial negotiation engagement had been effected with relative ease. But once the engagement was effected, it became an uphill battle all the way to the top. It was never clear that the destination would in fact be reached. To lure the Palestinians to step into this path, various key words and concepts had been incorporated into the general framework of the interim agreement, such as resolution 242 (1967), the right to self-determination, the international consensus and others. This step-by-step approach had led to disappointments in the peace process. Rather than assuming deception, high expectations on the Palestinian side were to be blamed. Israel had committed itself to Security Council resolution 242 (1967) as a foundation on which the negotiations would have been predicated. In doing so, Israel surely had also committed itself to the principle on which that resolution had been founded, namely, the inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by force. The underlying logic of this argument could easily be extended to other areas slated for the final talks, such as settlements, borders and water.

21. He stressed that Palestinian expectations from these negotiations were solidly based on an international legal foundation to which Israel had committed itself in the negotiations. That being the case, there now existed a clear standard by which to determine whether Israel was using a genuine or a deceptive strategy. Were Israel really committed to the principles underlying the interim agreement concerning final talks, it would have ceased all unilateral activities in the areas under its rule. But those actions had even increased since Prime Minister Barak had taken office and could only lead to the conclusion that Israel had never really been committed to those principles, and that its overall strategy with the Palestinians had been one of a grand deception. He described that situation as a classic case of ruler-nation syndrome by a nation inspired by greed and self-aggrandizement. He called upon Prime Minister Barak to state in unequivocal terms his readiness to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza, just as he had stated his willingness to withdraw from Lebanon. If there were not, at the end of that process, a viable Palestinian State alongside Israel, the only realistic option left would be a binational state.

22. **Tamar Gozansky**, Member of the Knesset and Deputy Chairperson of the Council of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, pointed out that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process was at a critical stage, with key dates having passed without results and hopes after the change of Government in Israel not materialized. At the same time, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to deteriorate. The policy of land confiscation and usurpation that characterized the previous Israeli Government had continued under Prime Minister Barak's leadership. Since he had taken office, Israel had confiscated from Palestinian residents in the West Bank about 1,000 dunums of land, and an additional 5,700 dunums west of Ramallah and in the northern part of the West Bank were declared to be military "training areas". In addition, the Israeli organization Rabbis for Human Rights had calculated that, since Prime Minister Barak had taken office in June 1999, more than 100,000 dunums had been confiscated or declared off limits in the Hebron area alone. It was obvious that this policy of "quick grabs" sabotaged negotiations with the Palestinians and overshadowed his stated desire to quickly reach a permanent settlement with the Palestinians. As previous Israeli Governments had, Barak was missing the opportunity to achieve an agreed permanent settlement that would solve the long-standing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. She reiterated the views of her party on the basic conditions for a stable Israeli-Palestinian peace: establishment of a Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital, the evacuation of all settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and a solution to the Palestinian refugee problem on the basis of United Nations resolutions.

23. **Valeriy Shuvaev**, Head of the Division for Israel and Palestine of the Department of Middle East and North Africa of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, emphasized that the resolutions and decisions of the United Nations had established an international legal foundation for the Middle East peace process and should become the cornerstone of a long-term settlement in the region. Lasting peace in the Middle East meant the establishment of firm security and

stability in the region. Political factors had increasing importance and priority over military ones. Political will, the establishment of mutual trust and a spirit of compromise would provide the political conditions for a settlement, reinforced by practical measures, including military ones, and by international guarantees.

24. He pointed out that the most important element guaranteeing the security in the Middle East was the achievement of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to their own State, a right already universally recognized and established in several documents which had the force of international law. That right must be achieved through negotiations. He stressed that it would be necessary to establish a mechanism to guarantee the implementation of the concluded agreements. He drew the Meeting's attention to a Russian proposal put forward in January 2000 by Mr. Ivanov, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the multilateral talks held in Moscow, to establish an organization for security, confidence-building measures and cooperation in the Middle East. Such an organization, comprising, on a voluntary basis, all parties concerned, would be the heir to the Madrid process and constitute the essential structure which would assure long-term regional cooperation. An independent Palestinian State should be one of the key members and active participants of this body.

25. **Judith Kipper**, Director, Middle East Forum, Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C., pointed out that she was optimistic about the future of the Middle East peace process. A Palestinian State was, for the first time in history, inevitable. According to statistics, over 70 per cent of the Israeli public said they believed there would be a Palestinian State. The conflict in the Middle East, in her view, was one of legitimate claims on both sides. Both parties, in the name of suffering and agony, had committed brutal deeds and crimes. Nevertheless, Israel and the Palestinians had decided themselves to sit together, to reduce tension and rhetoric. Referring to the broad coalition Government in Israel, she said that the apparent political paralysis was attributable to "tribal" politics and internal divisions in Israeli society that had been exacerbated by the Government of Prime Minister Netanyahu.

26. She continued by saying that the United States was committed to facilitating a solution of the Middle East conflict, although that conflict was no longer a threat to global peace and security. In her view it was a mistake for either side to strive for a victory in the peace negotiations. People should not think of peace as a victory. Peace was about gaining enough of what was being negotiated so that it would motivate you to keep your agreements. It was quite extraordinary to see relationships develop between Palestinian and Israeli officials. In spite of profound disagreements in the course of the negotiations, they enjoyed very cordial personal relationships. Unless the parties developed empathy for each other, it would be unlikely that negotiations would move forward and produce results. On the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) compromises should be found, coexistence developed and all parties should be allowed to meet their aspirations.

Plenary session II

The United Nations and the question of Palestine

27. The participants considered the following themes: the United Nations as guarantor of international legitimacy; guarding the rights of the Palestinian people; and advancing the economic and social development of the Palestinian people.

28. **Mani Shankar Aiyar**, Member of the Indian Parliament and Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee, said that Palestine had been perhaps the most persistent item on the agenda of the United Nations almost since the Organization's inception. He chronicled the history of United Nations involvement in the question of Palestine from the League of Nations through the Middle East war of October 1973. He noted that, in 1947, not a single Asian country had voted in favour of the fateful resolution 181 (II) that partitioned mandated Palestine, and described it as a non-Asian resolution imposed on the people of Asia. He noted that in the period 1969-1973, there was a growing rift between Security Council and General Assembly perspectives on matters relating to the Middle East, the General Assembly becoming the focus of the elaboration of Palestinian rights. In 1974, with the participation of the PLO, the General Assembly defined under the new agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine" the meaning of the "inalienable rights" of the Palestinian people to include the right of self-determination without external interference and the right to national independence and sovereignty.

29. The United Nations continued to address the question of Palestine through the decade of the 1980s. However, it was the end of the cold war and the breakup of the former Soviet Union that most profoundly changed the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the question of Palestine. The 1990s had seen the forum of the peace process shift from Madrid to Oslo to Washington with the United Nations acting as a "watchdog" over the Middle East peace process. Yet the centrality of resolution 242 (1967) and the availability of the forum of the United Nations as a platform for democratic expression had kept the role of the Organization crucially relevant to the question of Palestine, both in times of war and in times of the quest for peace. The current peace process had been pursued and must be further pursued only within the parameters laid down by a succession of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

30. **Ron Macintyre**, Senior Lecturer in Political Science, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, said that the only existing legal framework in international law for a political settlement on Jerusalem was to be found in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, defining it as a *corpus separatum*. The provisions on Jerusalem had never been implemented owing to subsequent conflict and political impasse between the Arab States and Israel. He showed how Israel, subsequent to the 1967 war, had changed the character and status of Jerusalem by annexing East Jerusalem, extending its boundaries, changing the demographic balance and surrounding it with a system of settlements. He said that the Israeli Government had created facts on the ground to pre-empt the return of land in Jerusalem and the West Bank to its rightful owners.

31. Any viable political solution on Jerusalem should address the following key principles: defining agreed boundaries for the city; upholding the unity and freedom of the city, including access to the holy places for the major communities; ensuring the equal rights of both parties to "determine" their own "national interests" within the framework of a unified city; and upholding mutual respect for the religious, civil and human rights of all parties within and beyond the administrative framework of the city. In conclusion, he stressed that any framework agreement ignoring or falling short of the right of the Palestinian people to determine its own national interests within Jerusalem and the Occupied Palestinian Territory would simply not work and would undermine the outcome of negotiations on other issues still to be finalized during the permanent status talks.

32. **Chinmaya Gharekhan**, former United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, said that the United Nations provided legitimacy to the inalienable rights of a people. Israel owed its legitimacy to the United Nations. The Organization, however, had not been involved in most situations of peacemaking. Peace had been brokered by parties outside the United Nations, but the peace agreements were usually brought to the United Nations for supervision and implementation. Any peace settlement of the question of Palestine would also have to be brought to the United Nations for implementation. He then spoke on the role of the United Nations in advancing the economic and social development of the Palestinian people. He said that up until 1967 Palestinians had had flourishing agricultural and horticultural sectors and there were enough jobs for the Palestinians so that they did not have to travel to Israel to find work. The deliberate policies of the Likud Government were responsible for making the Palestinian economy totally dependent on Israel. When Israel began the closures of the territories in 1992, the situation of the Palestinian economy had become desperate. Closures were a form of collective punishment that prevented the Palestinian people from going to work or university, and resulted in a fall of their living standards. This policy, which remained in force today, was the source of much suffering and led to insecurity, frustration and hostility on the part of the Palestinians towards the Israelis. He expressed confidence that, given the right environment and the establishment of an independent state, the Palestinian people would make tremendous progress.

33. **Dinh Thi Minh Huyen**, Director of the Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, said that, thanks to persistent

efforts made by the United Nations and the international community, the Middle East peace process, especially the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, had in recent years seen some encouraging outcomes despite numerous difficulties and obstacles. More than ever before, greater efforts were needed to create international solidarity with the just cause of the Palestinian people to achieve the right of national self-determination and an independent Palestinian State. The Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People would continue to play an important role in supporting the Palestinian people until a solution to the question of Palestine was found.

34. She pointed out that, as a nation which had undergone great suffering and sacrifices to gain its own national independence and freedom, the Government and people of Viet Nam extended their support to the Palestinians. The exchange of high-level delegations between Viet Nam and the Palestinian Authority and the signing of agreements on economic, cultural, scientific and technical matters had helped to establish the level of cooperation between the two parties.

35. **Nasser Al-Kidwa**, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, emphasized that the United Nations had permanent responsibility for the Question of Palestine until it was effectively resolved in all its aspects. The United Nations was the body that, in line with its own legitimacy, had partitioned Palestine in 1947. Resolution 181 (II) was disliked by the Palestinians, but immediately accepted by the Israelis. Israel, however, had introduced a different policy on the ground, not recognizing the boundaries laid out in the resolution, which demonstrated, from the outset, its non-compliance with respective United Nations decisions. As a consequence, the General Assembly had set up different bodies to deal with the issues. One of them, the Conciliation Commission (UNCCP), after several years of work, had concluded an extremely important task on land ownership. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had recently undertaken a very relevant project to modernize the UNCCP records to make them useable for future reference. Annually, the General Assembly adopted 25 resolutions dealing with the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, Israeli practices in the occupied territories and efforts to solve the conflict. Thus, the United Nations provided the ultimate protection of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

36. He deplored that the United Nations had been often prevented, by the veto of one permanent member, from using all available means to implement its resolutions. Security Council resolutions, however, were still very significant in preventing a much worse situation. Unlike the Israeli side, the Palestinian people wanted the United Nations to be fully involved in the peace process. Israel had continuously called for an end to United Nations involvement in the question of Palestine, with the aim of leaving the Palestinian side at the mercy of the imbalance of power on the ground. He said that particular attention should be given to the 25 resolutions adopted by the Security Council affirming the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the Occupied Territory. In view of the continued expansion of settlements by the Israeli Government, the Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention should reconvene as determined by the Conference itself, in July 1999, and by the Tenth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly. In conclusion, he called upon the Organization to accord full membership to Palestine in the United Nations to enable it to participate fully in the Millennium Summit to be held in September 2000, which was in line with the international consensus and existing agreements.

Plenary III

International support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

37. The participants discussed action by Asian States towards promoting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people within the United Nations system, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and other intergovernmental organizations; the experience of Asian States in the struggle for national independence and sovereignty; the experience of Asia in the quest for economic independence and sustainable development; prospects for the development of bilateral economic cooperation, trade and the establishment of business partnerships with the Palestinian people; as well as the role of civil society in promoting institution-building.

38. **Adam Keller**, Spokesperson of Gush Shalom, the Israeli Peace Bloc, recounted the actions of peace activists and non-governmental organizations operating in Israel. For the past three years he and other activists had been campaigning against Israeli zoning and land development laws which discriminated against Palestinians. Such actions had included calling attention to the situation via the media, organizing demonstrations and carrying out acts of civil disobedience such as immediately rebuilding Palestinian houses that had been demolished by Israeli forces. This had resulted in the slowing down of the demolition of Palestinian housing and had forced the Government of Mr. Barak to have all future demolitions authorized by the respective ministry.

39. He noted that other participants at the Meeting had called for the creation of an independent Palestinian State by September 2000. He cautioned that any such action would be more effective if it occurred within an agreement with Israel rather than as a unilateral action as that would no doubt create further confrontation with Israel. He suggested that international organizations and governmental delegations should consider what they might do at that time on the international level to assist in this transition. The United States, Israel's traditional ally, held veto power in the Security Council. Perhaps a campaign should be launched in the United States to encourage that country to abstain from any vote over a declaration of a Palestinian State rather than vote against it. He urged the organizers of the Meeting to consider holding future meetings on the situation in the Middle East in the Palestinian territories. That would enable many Palestinians and Israelis who were not able to travel to other venues in Europe or North America because of financial constraints to participate.

40. **Andrew Vincent**, Director of the Centre for Middle East and North African Studies, Macquarie University, Sydney, examined Australia's involvement with the Question of Palestine in detail and said that it continued a low-key policy of "even-handedness", which had been very harmful to Palestinian aspirations in the past. In his opinion that was attributable to Australia's firm alignment with the United States, in an effort to avoid diplomatically opposing Washington, at least on the issue of Palestine. Evidence for this could be seen in the levels of Australia's foreign assistance to the Palestinians. The amount of aid from Australia, which had never been large, was declining. Whenever the issue of Palestine was off the international or American agenda, Australian aid dropped. But when the United States was brokering agreements in the harsh spotlight of the international media, as with the Wye River Memorandum, then Australia's involvement rose as well.

41. Analysing Australia's voting pattern in the General Assembly, he drew attention to a series of abstentions and negative votes on resolutions regarding the rights of the Palestinians. That represented in his view an Australian desire to support the United States on Arab-Israeli issues. Australia was unlikely to take any major initiative or even increase its level of aid unless it was given a green light from the United States. Australia's stance on the Question of Palestine was also very much subject to domestic issues such as trade and the influence of its powerful Jewish lobby. He concluded that Australia remained a small to middle-ranking power that tended to avoid international headlines and concerned itself mainly with domestic and regional issues.

42. **Eisuke Naramoto**, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Economics, Hosei University, Tokyo, said that there were more than a dozen Japanese citizens groups advocating for the rights of Palestinians. Despite their relatively small size, through the years they had managed to arouse some sympathy among the Japanese public for the plight and struggle of the Palestinian people. The Japanese people were still unfamiliar with Middle East issues, in general, and with Palestine in particular. The Government had not become interested in the problem until the outbreak of the October war of 1973. Interest in the Middle East and Palestine among the Japanese had dropped dramatically with the end of the oil crisis, especially following the Gulf war. In one of the rare cases when the Japanese Government had taken a different stance from that of the United States, in 1979 Japan had declared that the Palestinians had the right to establish an independent State.

43. He pointed out that it was in the 1980s that Japanese non-governmental organizations supporting the Palestinian cause had emerged. Several prominent NGOs had evolved from ad hoc citizens groups that had spontaneously begun activities to offer immediate aid to Palestinians in extreme hardship. There was substantial support for the Palestinian people in the areas of medicine and health, social welfare, agriculture, culture and exchange programmes. Despite their small

size and weak financial base, which consisted of individual donations from members and supporters, Japanese NGOs believed it was necessary to continue and develop their activities. He was sure that Japanese citizens groups that supported the Palestinian people would continue to play an important role until the day when the question of Palestine was finally resolved.

44. **Li Guofu**, Director, Division for South Asian, Middle Eastern and African Studies, China Institute of International Studies, Beijing, emphasized that 2000 was a very crucial year for the peace process. Any result would affect the whole region of the Middle East, which would become either more stabilized and peaceful or would have to face more violence and instability. Previous wars had brought much blood and tears, but it had become clear that no country could conquer another and eternally impose its will on another people. Peaceful negotiations had begun once the “land for peace” formula had been recognized as the basic principle. At the same time, the parties had committed themselves to resolve their conflicts through peaceful negotiations based on the relevant United Nations resolutions. He defined three stages of the peace process between the Israelis and the Palestinians, linked to the tenure of the Israeli Prime Ministers Yitzak Rabin, Benjamin Netanyahu and Ehud Barak.

45. He drew attention to tangible, concrete results of the peace process reached so far. Israel’s image in the international community had changed, it was now able to establish diplomatic relations with a range of new countries and it had increased its own security. He believed that wisdom, courage and resourcefulness on the part of the heads of State in the region and efforts by the international community were essential to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The establishment of a Palestinian State should not be considered as the end of the process, but as a new phase in the struggle to achieve the inalienable rights.

46. **Nguyen Quang Khai**, Head of the Western Asia and Africa Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam, said he believed that a genuine peace in the Middle East would never exist so long as the Palestinian issue was unresolved and the Palestinian people did not enjoy fundamental national rights. Tension and violence would continue unabated until all parties concerned found reasonable solutions to such key issues as the status of Jerusalem, territorial border delimitation, refugees, distribution of water resources and especially the issue of Palestinian statehood. As a nation that had experienced long years of living in exile without statehood, the Jewish people above all should understand the suffering of the Palestinian people. There was a time when Palestinians and Jews had lived together on the same land.

47. He reaffirmed Viet Nam’s wholehearted support of the Palestinian people’s struggle for fundamental national rights, including self-determination and a Palestinian State in its homeland. He welcomed every initiative and effort by regional and international communities to untangle deadlocks, remove obstacles and accelerate the Middle East peace process. The international community should ensure close and effective coordination in adopting different modalities and measures aimed at speeding up the peace process. The United Nations should participate and play a greater role in securing a fair solution, ensuring the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and a lasting peace in the Middle East while mobilizing every source of material and spiritual support. In that way the Palestinian people, and other countries in the region, could erase the painful memories of war and join forces in building a Middle East of peace and stability. He believed that with good will and determination and the support of the United Nations, the question of Palestine would soon be resolved and the people in the region would enjoy a life of peace, stability and development.

Plenary IV

The role of parliaments in achieving the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

48. **Lusuvandan Bold**, Member of the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia and Member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), said that the IPU was a focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue. It worked for peace and cooperation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracy. It supported the efforts of the United Nations and shared its objectives. As a political organization whose principal goal was peace, the elimination of conflict situations through political negotiations and other peaceful means was a special priority of the Union. The current conditions of democratization, liberalization and globalization, which constituted a new turn in world history, had reinforced significantly the IPU’s role in international politics.

49. The Middle East had been on the IPU’s agenda for several decades. In 1987 a six-member Committee on the Middle East had been established to promote direct contacts and parliamentary action in support of the peace process. At the 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Seoul in April 1997, the IPU had adopted, without a vote, a resolution on the status of Jerusalem which had called for the revocation of all measures and actions designed to alter the legal status, demographic composition or geographical structure of the city. It also had recommended that the situation in Jerusalem be monitored through the IPU’s Committee on Middle East Questions. The Union’s Middle East Committee on the Question of the Affiliation of Palestine had examined Palestine’s observer status at the Union and recommended that the Palestinian delegation be given specific rights similar to those it had in the United Nations. The members of that Committee had undertaken to encourage the representatives of all parliaments in the region to take concrete action in support of the positive developments currently under way. His organization believed that the work of parliamentarians was essential to the success of the peace process in the Middle East. As opinion makers, he said, parliamentarians could play a crucial role in keeping the public informed about the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

50. **Humayun Rasheed Choudhury**, Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, said that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had enlarged the traditional vision of intergovernmental conferences and had made it possible to add “parliamentary actors of the new diplomacy” to this effort. He stressed that parliaments were the most effective confidence-building vehicle among people and called for sustained and meaningful contacts between parliamentarians of the Middle East. Parliaments represented the voice of the people and the respect for law, including international law, was their first responsibility. It was the specific duty of parliamentarians as lawmakers to repeat in every international form that it was a universal principle of international law that military conquest did not grant territorial rights.

51. He commended the progress in the peace process between the Israelis and Palestinians, but deplored that unilateral steps too often threatened to jeopardize its success, such as expanding settlements, accumulating prisoners, attempts to renegotiate accords or increasing the military nuclear power in the region in the hands of one sole State. It was important that the economic future of the Palestinians not be overlooked. He suggested that parliamentarians and Asian peoples should work towards committing their Governments’ support to economic cooperation with the Palestinian Authority. Specifically, this could include orienting parliamentary business towards the establishment of trade links and business partnerships by enacting measures that would facilitate the development of Palestine in a South-South cooperative perspective.

52. **Phan Quang**, Vice Chairman of the Committee for Foreign Relations of the National Assembly of Viet Nam, said that the question of Palestine had always engendered great interest within the international community. The Palestinian people, after their own considerable effort and with the support of the international community, had achieved some progress in the search for a just and satisfactory solution to the Middle East/Palestine question. However, many difficulties remained and these deserved special attention. Any lasting solution would have to ensure respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return and the establishment of a State in their territory. The United Nations had declared itself responsible for the Question of Palestine until the issue was resolved in a complete and satisfactory manner. It also had called for increased assistance and support for the Palestinian people.

53. The Palestine question was always a matter of great interest at conferences of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, he said. Many delegations, including Viet

Nam's, had expressed their support for the struggle for the noble cause of the Palestinian people. He hoped that the United Nations and the international community would be able, as soon as possible, to put an end to the climate of insecurity in the region. He looked forward to the day when Palestine would establish its own assembly empowered to take part as a full-fledged member in the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and other parliamentary organizations.

54. **Tamar Gozansky**, Member of the Israeli Knesset, said that in Israel, parliamentarians were elected on the basis of their social and political programmes. She agreed with other speakers that parliamentarians were influential in shaping public opinion about issues and could play a very useful role in creating a better atmosphere for peace. However, parliamentarians did not sign peace agreements; Governments did. She gave a detailed picture of the parliamentary system in Israel, which, in her opinion, had led to the current impasse in several of the tracks of the Middle East peace process.

55. She supported the idea of cooperation among parliamentarians in the Middle East. Unfortunately, owing to the prevailing circumstances in the region, such dialogue was limited. This was the case between the Israeli and Palestinian parliaments. There was no dialogue between the Knesset and parliaments in neighbouring Arab States. She was not placing blame but pointing out a collective failure of parliamentarians in the region to find a common language of mutual understanding and study of problems in the Middle East together. She hoped that the Inter-Parliamentary Union and other bodies could assist parliamentarians in her region to find ways to communicate with each other and form a better understanding of various points of view in the region.

56. The Meeting then heard the presentations of the two speakers for the NGO workshop and included their views on the role of civil society in the ensuing discussion.

57. **Hoang Thinh**, Vice-Chairman of the Viet Nam Committee for Afro-Asian-Latin American Solidarity and Cooperation, said that the Vietnamese people had followed keenly the development and persistent struggle of the Palestinian people and were heartened by their achievements. Viet Nam had always supported the Middle East peace process and efforts to reach a fair and durable solution to problems in the region based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and the "land for peace" principle. The unflinching support of Vietnamese non-governmental organizations for the Palestinian cause was the basis for traditional friendship and bilateral cooperation between Viet Nam and Palestine. The Viet Nam Committee for Solidarity with the Palestinian People, founded in 1982, had organized solidarity meetings, held talks and film shows on the Middle East peace process and issued statements in support of the Palestinian Authority. Viet Nam was proud to have donated 1,000 tons of rice worth US\$ 314,000 to Palestine in 1995.

58. The Viet Nam Union of Peace, Solidarity and Friendship Organizations believed that non-governmental organizations around the world and in Asia should intensify their solidarity activities morally as well as materially in support of the Palestinian people through the following plan of action: organizing national and regional meetings to promote the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the signing of a framework agreement; working to adopt resolutions in representative bodies, including parliaments, in support of the Palestinian people; focusing the media spotlight on the issue; and raising funds and materials needed by the Palestinian people, such as medicines, food, educational materials and the like.

59. **Mohideen Abdul Kader**, Legal and Research Consultant, Third World Network, Penang, said that NGOs could not remain indifferent to the injustice being perpetrated on the Palestinians by Israel. An end must be brought to the crime of silence on the part of the international community and pressure brought to uphold and protect the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. There were hundreds of NGOs in Asia and other parts of the world working on human rights issues. In the case of East Timor, Bosnia and Kosovo they had successfully persuaded the international community, in particular the big Powers, to take effective steps to put an end to human rights violations and uphold international law. In the case of Palestine, similar efforts should be undertaken. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict should be at the heart of activities undertaken by NGOs to mobilize public support and lobby national Governments and international organizations to resolve this conflict, based on international law and justice.

60. He agreed with activities suggested by the previous speaker and suggested the following as additional actions for NGOs to undertake: exposing the illegal pressure exerted by influential Israeli lobbies in the United States and the United Kingdom; persuading Governments to make diplomatic relations with Israel conditional upon Israeli compliance with United Nations resolutions on the occupied territories; and setting up volunteer corps to help Palestine in developing its economic, social and cultural facilities.

IV. NGO workshop

61. The NGO representatives present at the Meeting met informally to discuss issues of mutual interest. They exchanged information with regard to their initiatives and projects, funding and relationship with Governments. The representative of the General Union of Palestinian Women described the concrete projects her organization implemented in Gaza and the West Bank geared towards creating employment and business opportunities for women. The Union also organized training seminars and workshops to empower women to better deal with legal and business issues in society.

62. The NGO representatives discussed possibilities for improving communication among themselves about their initiatives and for coordinating concrete activities. The web site of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat was considered an important tool for obtaining information from the worldwide network of NGOs on the question of Palestine. The Asian NGOs said that they would inform the Division about their concrete activities and would appreciate it if that information could become part of the web site.

63. The NGOs also discussed possible structures for improved coordination of their activities. The suggestion was made to establish, wherever feasible, national platforms of NGOs for further cooperation at the national level. Focal points for NGOs could be appointed on a subregional level, for example, for South-East Asia, South Asia, North-East Asia, and so forth. The focal points would facilitate information and coordination with the United Nations and the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine.

64. The NGOs suggested that a specific NGO conference for NGOs of the Middle East Region, in particular Palestinian and Israeli NGOs, should be held as soon as possible in the territory under the Palestinian Authority, or in one of the countries of the region. The representative of the Japanese Palestine Medical Association suggested that the experience of a Japanese NGO, "Peace Boat", should be utilized and that arrangements should be made for a vessel to hold such a conference at an appropriate location.

V. Closing session

65. **Walter Balzan**, Rapporteur of the Asian Meeting, introduced the final document of the Meeting, the Hanoi Declaration (see annex I).

66. **Nguyen Tam Chien**, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, said that the Meeting was another vivid demonstration of the solidarity and strong support of the international community, and of Asia in particular, for the just cause of the Palestinian people. Despite the progress made, the

path to a just and lasting peace in the region was fraught with difficulties and obstacles. That situation called for a greater contribution by the international community and the United Nations, which should include, *inter-alia*, helping the parties directly concerned to overcome mistrust, scrupulously observing the agreements reached and contributing to the promotion of the negotiation aimed at resolving outstanding differences. He expressed confidence that the international community would be more active in fostering greater solidarity with and extending both spiritual and material assistance to the Palestinian people so that they could develop a socio-economic basis in the recovered territory, enabling them to move towards the establishment of an independent and prosperous country.

67. He emphasized that the Vietnamese people, having endured great hardships and sacrifices for peace and national independence, had always understood and shared in the difficulties and hardships facing the Palestinian people. He expressed the hope that the Palestinian people would soon regain its legitimate national rights, and he welcomed and supported international and regional efforts to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East and a satisfactory solution to the Palestinian question.

68. **Suleiman Alnajib**, Member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Special Envoy of Yasser Arafat, expressed his organization's gratitude to the Government of Viet Nam and its people for their ongoing support and for hosting the very fruitful Meeting. The Meeting was an important indicator that the Palestinian leadership was working in the right direction in trying to achieve peace through negotiations and other diplomatic efforts. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had worked tirelessly for the cause of the Palestinian people. He thanked the experts and delegates to the Meeting and the people of Asia for the deep understanding and solidarity they had shown in support of the Palestinian struggle.

69. **Ibra Deguène Ka**, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, expressed confidence that the Meeting had contributed to a better understanding of the problems that beset the quest for a peaceful solution of the question of Palestine, as well as the urgent need for members of the international community, including States Members of the United Nations, intergovernmental and civil society organizations, to rally support for the Palestinian people at a very crucial stage in the peace negotiations. The Meeting was a continuing demonstration of the international community's commitment to lend its full support to the peace process, until such time that the Palestinian people achieved its right to self-determination, independence and statehood. He emphasized that Viet Nam had demonstrated its solid commitment to and support for the struggle of the Palestinian people, and for the objectives of the United Nations. The warm hospitality and friendliness of the Vietnamese people had made the visit to Hanoi a truly memorable experience.

ANNEX I

Hanoi Declaration

We, the participants of the United Nations Asian Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held under the theme "Achieving the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people – a key to peace in the Middle East," in Hanoi, City of Peace, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, declare:

Our broad and determined commitment to support the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State;

That Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, as well as other Arab territories, must be brought to an end without delay and that mutual recognition and peaceful coexistence must be given the opportunity to flourish;

That Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which embody the principle of land for peace and form the legal basis for the Middle East peace process, must be adhered to;

That the recent breakdown in the permanent status talks puts the Israeli-Palestinian peace process at a critical stage. The lack of progress in the full and strict implementation of the Wye River and Sharm el-Sheikh agreements as well as the continuation of settlement activities are a cause of great concern and threaten to jeopardize the peace negotiations;

That in view of the continued settlement activities, the United Nations and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention should play an effective role in reconvening the Conference of the High Contracting Parties;

That Governments, intergovernmental organizations, parliamentarians and civil society organizations, particularly Asian non-governmental organizations, should exert all efforts to support the peace process and its successful conclusion;

That the deadline of September 2000 to achieve a permanent status agreement in accordance with the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum and the international consensus which was developed at the end of the five-year transition last May, should be observed;

That the United Nations should grant full membership to Palestine to enable it to participate fully in the United Nations Millennium Summit to be held on 6 September 2000. The Summit marks an opportunity for a moral recommitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and new political momentum for international cooperation;

That Asian States, having had a unique experience in their struggle for decolonization and national sovereignty, should continue their moral, political and material support for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. We welcome the long-standing commitment of Asian States to the peace process, particularly the efforts to achieve a permanent peace settlement between Palestinians and Israelis; Our appreciation to H.E. Tran Duc Luong, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam; H.E. Phan Van Khai, Prime Minister of Viet Nam; H.E. Nguyen Dy Nien, Foreign Minister of Viet Nam; H.E. Chu Tuan Nha, Minister for Science, Technology and Environment of Viet Nam and to the Government of Viet Nam for hosting the Meeting and for the assistance and support extended to the United Nations Secretariat in its preparation.

We salute the struggle for independence and the right to self-determination of the people of Viet Nam. We thank the people of Hanoi for their warmth and hospitality and for their assistance with the Meeting.

ANNEX II

List of participants

Speakers

Mani Shankar Aiyar
Member of the Indian Parliament and Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee,
New Delhi

M. Nasser Al-Kidwa
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, New York

Suleiman Alnajjab
Member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Ramallah

Luvsanvandan Bold
Member of the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia and Member of the
Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Ulaanbaatar

Humayun Rasheed Choudhury
Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, Dhaka

Dinh Thi Minh Huyen
Director of the Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hanoi

Chinmaya Gharekhan
Former United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories

Tamar Gozansky
Member of the Knesset, Tel Aviv

Hoang Thinh
Vice-Chairman of the Committee of Solidarity for Asia, Africa and Latin America and the
Viet Nam Union of Organizations for Peace and Friendship, Hanoi

Mohideen Abdul Kader
Legal and Research Consultant, Third World Network, Penang

Adam Keller
Spokesperson, Gush Shalom, Tel Aviv

Judith Kipper
Director, Middle East Forum, Council on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C.

Li Guofu
Director, Division for South Asian, Middle Eastern and African Studies
China Institute of International Studies, Beijing

Ron Macintyre
Senior Lecturer in Political Science, University of Canterbury, Christchurch

Eisuke Naramoto
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Economics, Hosei University, Tokyo

Nguyen Quang Khai
Head of Western Asia and Africa Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hanoi

Phan Quang
Vice-Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations of the National Assembly of Viet Nam

Sari Nusseibeh
President, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem

Valeriy Shuvaev
Head of Division for Israel and Palestine, Department of Middle East and North Africa,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Moscow

Andrew Vincent
Senior Lecturer in Middle East Politics, School of Philosophy and Politics
Macquarie University, Sydney

Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Adrianus Mooy
Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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

Ibra Deguène Ka
Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations,
Chairman of the Committee and Head of Delegation

Walter Balzan
Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations,
Rapporteur of the Committee

Pham Binh Minh
Deputy Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations

M. Nasser Al-Kidwa
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

Governments

Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, China, Cuba, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Viet Nam

**Non-member States maintaining permanent observer missions
at Headquarters**

Switzerland

**Entities having received a standing invitation to participate
as observers in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly
and maintaining permanent observer missions at Headquarters**

Palestine

United Nations organs, agencies and bodies

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
United Nations Industrial Development Organization
World Health Organization

Intergovernmental organizations

Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie
Movement of Non-Aligned Countries

Special guest

Ngo Quang Xuan,
Former Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations

Non-governmental organizations

General Union of Palestinian Women, Cairo
Inter-Parliamentary Union
LCMS World Mission
MSRI/Medical Aid for Palestinians, Kuala Lumpur
Muslim World League, Bangkok
Pemuda UMNO Malaysia
Organization for Educational Resources and Technological Training (DRT)
Save The Children (France)
Third World Network, Penang

Media

Agencia EFE
Agence France-Presse (AFP)
Akahata (newspaper)
Army's Daily
Ba'o Vietnam News
Business Review
Communist Review
Deutsche Presse-Agentur
Hanoi Moi Newspaper
Hanoi Radio & Television
Laodong (newspaper)
Le Courier du Vietnam
People's Daily
Prensa Latina (Cuba)
Reuters News Agency
Saigon Times Weekly
Tourism Weekly
Tuoi Tre
TV Asahi
Vietnam Banking Review
Vietnam Investment Review
Vietnam News Agency
Vietnam Television
Vietnam Tourism Newspaper
Voice of Vietnam Radio
World Affairs Newspaper
Xinhua News Agency
Yomiuri Shimbun
