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**Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, 23 November 2004 - Secretary-General's press encounter following a meeting of the Middle East Quartet**

**SG:** We had a very good meeting of the Quartet discussing the peace process in the Middle East and we are all encouraged by what is happening and we reaffirmed our determination to work for the Palestinian leadership to support the elections which are due in January, to work with them on their reform processes and to ensure that the international community gives them the necessary support for their economic and social programmes. We also believe that this is an opportunity to really come together and move ahead with the implementation of the Roadmap and we believe that the Israeli government is also ready to do this.

**Q:** What specific help can you offer the Palestinians at this time?

**SG:** I think we have been working with them in planning the elections and I think we will stay with them throughout, and I suspect members of the Quartet would also send in the election monitors and offer other advice. We would also, on the financial front, have to make sure that they get the necessary support they need for their budgetary support and not just from the Quartet but from other countries and also there are discussions with the Israeli government about releasing some other funds due to the Palestinians.

**Q:** What are the arrangements for allowing movement around for Palestinians?

**SG:** Obviously that will have to be part of the process, if you are going to have elections, and people have to campaign and move around to vote, some of the restrictions will have to be lifted and we are hopeful that that will be done.