

**UNITED
NATIONS****MEETINGS COVERAGE AND PRESS RELEASES**

19 MAY 2016

SG/SM/17766-GA/PAL/1369

Secretary-General Hails Sweden's 'Strong and Steadfast' Support for Peace, in Message at United Nations Seminar on Assistance to Palestinian People

Following is UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message, delivered by Robert Piper, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, to the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, in Stockholm today: I am pleased to send greetings to all the participants of the Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People. I thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, as well as the Government of Sweden for hosting this event, which focuses on "Agenda 2030: Paving the Way towards a Peaceful, Independent and Sustainable State of Palestine".

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers a universal, integrated and transformative plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity. It pledges to leave no one behind. The true test of this Agenda lies in its implementation in all parts of the world and by all stakeholders, acting in partnership.

Sweden has demonstrated its firm commitment to the 2030 Agenda through its recent initiative to form a high-level group that will promote the exchange of experiences as well as discussions on challenges and solutions between Governments, civil society, the private sector and international organizations. I thank Sweden for taking this important step and for its strong and steadfast support to the people of Palestine and the cause of peace, stretching back to the service of the Swedish diplomat Folke Bernadotte, who was assassinated in 1948 while pursuing his duties as the United Nations General Assembly-appointed Mediator for Palestine.

The successful implementation of Agenda 2030 will be critical for the transition of Palestine to a peaceful, independent and sustainable State, as well as to international efforts aimed at preserving the two-State solution. The United Nations family remains firmly committed to helping Palestine build its capacity to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and make them meaningful for the most vulnerable.

I welcome the initial steps of the Palestinian Government to integrate the Agenda into its national development plans and aspirations to achieve statehood. The signing of the Paris Agreement on climate change by President Mahmoud Abbas was another indication of the commitment of the State of Palestine towards the implementation of the Goals.

There can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development. Connecting development efforts to humanitarian action, human rights and advancement of the peace process is critical for progress. As numerous development and military experts have noted, the fact that generations of Palestinians have lived under nearly half a century of occupation without any significant political progress is a major factor fuelling frustration and despair — particularly among youth. The human potential of millions of people has been denied. The result is a tragedy for both sides. It is incumbent upon all of us to do everything in our power to re-establish a political horizon that leads to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

Sustainable peace rests on a two-State solution that meets the national aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians, living and prospering side by side in peace and security. The United Nations and I personally remain committed to assisting the parties and the international community to bring the occupation and this long-standing conflict to an end.

In this spirit, please accept my best wishes for a successful event.

For information media. Not an official record.

<http://www.un.org/press/en/2016/sgsm17766.doc.htm>