



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

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**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Hussein Haniff,
Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations,
on Agenda Item 61: Permanent Sovereignty of the Palestinian People
in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of
the Arab Population in the Occupied Syrian Golan, over their Natural Resources,
at the Second Committee of the Sixty-Seventh Session of the United Nations
General Assembly, New York, 06 November 2012**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia for the report that was presented under this agenda item. Malaysia also welcomes the active work of UN-Habitat in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in East Jerusalem, Area C and the Gaza strip in support of the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian communities.

2. As highlighted in the report, the continued occupation of Israel over Palestinian land and territory and the use of policies and measures that violate international humanitarian and human rights laws continues to cause untold economic and social miseries to the Palestinian people. Let me stress here that the sufferings of the Palestinians are the longest global tragedy that is beyond comparison in modern times.

3. The brutality by Israel and the hardship it continue to inflict on the lives of the Palestinians are clearly evident in the statistics provided in the report, which I would like to briefly quote:

“Between 30 March 2011 and 29 March 2012, 122 Palestinians were killed and 2,077 others were injured, including 362 children. By 2012, 4,411 Palestinians remained in Israeli prisons, among them 183 minors. Israeli authorities destroyed 620 Palestinian-owned structures in 2011, a 42 percent increase compared to 2010. A total of 1,100 Palestinians were displaced as a result of home demolitions and another 140 were displaced following settler violence.” End of quote.

4. The statistics not only demonstrates the serious economic and social repercussions of the Israeli illegal occupation in Palestine, but also Israel’s blatant disregard to the right to live of the Palestinian people.

5. Let me now share with this august Second Committee of my recent trip to Gaza on a UN mission as a member of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Right of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the territories occupied since 1967. I have earlier related to the Security Council last July of my first hand experience in Gaza and would like to also share with this Committee as my observations are also related to the agenda item to be discussed today. While in Gaza, we had the opportunity to observe the actual situation on the ground and met directly with witnesses and victims of Israel's blockade. The blockade imposed since 2007 had greatly aggravated the economic and humanitarian situation in Gaza.

6. We also met Palestine fishermen, whose livelihoods were ruined by Israel's illegal blockade in flagrant disregard of the Oslo Accord. The fishermen used to bring in almost up to 4,000 tons of fish a year. Now, they can bring in only 1,400 tons. Even within the arbitrary three mile limit, the fishermen are subject to arrest, abuse and deprivation of their fishing equipment. The farmers too are not spared. They had their farmlands and agriculture equipment destroyed by Israeli bulldozers in the buffer zone. The farmers complained that the self imposed security zone by Israel in effect expropriated 35 per cent of their Gaza's agriculture land. Again, their livelihoods have been devastated.

7. The business community in Gaza provided the Committee with detailed information regarding the impact of Israel's blockade on the economy. They noticed that imports remain less than fifty per cent of pre blockade levels. This has devastating impact as imports of construction materials are urgently needed, to build about 40,000 apartments, as thousands of Palestinians had their homes destroyed in the many Israeli military operation. The construction materials are also urgently needed to build more schools as 85% of schools in Gaza were forced to operate on double shifts, due to the severe shortage of classrooms, thereby curtailing their right to education.

8. In short, the principal result of Israel's blockade has been to make 80 per cent of the Palestinians dependent on international humanitarian aid. Without a doubt, I admire the resilience of Gazans, for being able to survive on so little, especially in the face of the inadequate healthcare, frequent power outages and frequent incidents of violence that mark their daily lives. But this cannot continue. The blockade is illegal and amounts to collective punishment of 1.6 million of Palestinians.

Mr. Chairman,

9. Although the General Assembly, and the Security Council, have adopted more than 200 resolutions on the Question of Palestine, at the last count, yet there has been no tangible outcomes in bringing this illegal occupation to an end. How long more does the Palestinians have to endure this misery? We have to act in concert with all honesty, and end this illegal occupation. And we have to act fast.

10. The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources continued to be deprived. We therefore demand that Israel, the occupying Power, cease the exploitation, damage, cause of loss or depletion, and endangerment of the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan.

11. Although the report acknowledged this situation, the international community, and the Security Council in particular, are still struggling to find an amicable solution to this issue. It is a shame that the international community had failed to provide the Palestinians and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan with the rights over their natural resources, and their right to live in dignity.

12. To help mitigate the hardship faced by the Palestinians and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan, we urge the United Nations Development system to strengthen its programmes of assistance to them through adequate resources and effective operational activities. In this regard, we call upon donor countries and countries in a position to do so, to ensure that, relevant UN development agencies are provided with adequate and predictable financial resources for them to carry out their work effectively in support of the Palestinian Authority and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan.

Mr. Chairman,

13. On Palestine's quest for membership in the United Nations, Malaysia would like to reaffirm its support for their bid to become a full member of the United Nations. The resolution of the illegal occupation should lead to a two-State solution, taking into consideration the security concerns of both parties. In this regard, Malaysia is encouraged by the fact that 132 countries have recognized Palestine as a state and we hope many more will do so soon. It is to our hope that a peaceful and lasting solution to the crisis will prevail soon in order to end the economic and social hardship faced by the people of Palestine and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan.

15. Let me conclude Mr. Chairman, by stressing that permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources cannot be achieved without finding a final solution to their plight. For Malaysia, the solution lies with the ending of Israeli occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories, which would lead to a two-State solution and the return of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.