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Agenda Item 37;
Question of Palestine

Statement delivered by
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Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. This statement is based on the Declaration on behalf of the European Union that was made earlier today by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy, Catherine Ashton.

The Acceding country Croatia^{*}, the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia^{*}, Montenegro^{*}, Iceland[†] and Serbia^{*}, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Albania, as well as the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Mr. President,

Today's decision by the UN General Assembly to accord Non-Member Observer State status in the United Nations to Palestine comes at a time when the latest escalation in the on-going Israeli-Palestinian conflict has caused the death of a large number of innocent civilians. This is a bitter reminder of the urgent necessity to move forward towards the end of the conflict. Only a political solution to the conflict can bring lasting security, peace and prosperity to Palestinians and Israelis. A comprehensive negotiated peace, which is a fundamental interest of the EU, as well as the parties in the region, must and can be achieved on the basis of a two-state solution with the State of Israel and a sovereign, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine, both living in agreed borders and enjoying peace and security.

The EU has repeatedly expressed its support and wish for Palestine to become a full member of the United Nations as part of a solution to the conflict. The EU has also consistently worked to advance the Palestinian Authority's state-building efforts under Prime Minister

^{*} Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

[†] Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.

Fayyad. It will continue to do so. Recalling the Berlin Declaration of March 1999, the EU reiterates its readiness to recognize a Palestinian State when appropriate.

Mr. President,

Looking ahead after today's vote, it is important for all parties and actors involved to work towards a settlement of the conflict with renewed purpose and sense of urgency. The European Union recalls its well-known positions on intra-Palestinian reconciliation behind President Abbas, settlements and Israel's security. The European Union calls on all parties to pursue actions conducive to an environment of confidence necessary to ensure meaningful negotiations and to refrain from actions that undermine the credibility of the process. The European Union urges both sides to seek constructive ways to overcome the current obstacles for a resumption of direct negotiations without delay or preconditions. It welcomes in this regard the positive statements previously made by President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu and urges them to maintain these commitments.

The EU reaffirms its position that clear parameters defining the basis for negotiations are key elements for a successful outcome, together with the avoiding of unilateral measures and acts on the ground which undermine confidence and the viability of the two-state solution.

The European Union reaffirms that it will not recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties and recalls its position on negotiations, including the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council in December 2009, in May 2012 as well as the statement delivered on behalf of the EU at the UN Security Council on 21 April 2011.

The European Union will work actively, within the Quartet and with international partners, in support of efforts to bring about substantive negotiations in the coming months.