

Statement by the State of Palestine

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Thank you Mr. President, and, at the outset, we would like to express our appreciation to the Working Group on the Right to Development and to the OHCHR and SG for their commendable reports.

The State of Palestine aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the Arab Group;

Mr. President,

Implementation of the right to development is a necessary condition for the realization of all human rights.

In the occupied State of Palestine, however, an obstructive and destructive force has been hampering the Palestinian people's right to development for decades. For over 65 years, Israel's ruthless colonization and military occupation policies have proven to be the most devastating obstacle to Palestinian economic, social and institutional development.

With ongoing and continuous settlement-building, land confiscation, demolition of homes, of water infrastructure, of crops; with over 500 roadblocks and military checkpoints, excessive use of force, siege, apartheid, theft of and impeded access to natural resources; with mass incarceration, arbitrary detention, torture; with an illegal annexation Wall cutting through Palestinian agricultural land, dispossessing, in the process, scores of farmers from their land. Mr. President, with all of these brutal practices and violations of international law, how can Palestine really, sustainably, develop? Perhaps this Council has had enough of hearing about Israel's violations; well, the Palestinian people have had enough of living them.

The Israeli occupation not only hinders the economic development of Palestine but also violates the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination, without which real sovereignty over their natural resources, and real development, will never be reached.

In this regard, my delegation calls on the Working Group to pay attention, in its forthcoming meetings, to the specific impediments faced by people living under Israeli occupation to achieving full enjoyment of their right to development. We call on the Working Group to focus on the necessary link between respecting the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and achieving their right to development, as well as the crippling impact of Israel's mass incarceration of Palestinians, including children, women, political leaders and parliamentarians, peaceful protesters and human rights activists, on the fulfillment of the Palestinian people's potential for development.

Mr. President,

Further to this, and turning to the Thematic Report of the OHCHR on Unilateral Coercive measures, my delegation would like to emphasize the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the realization of the right to development.

Israel's blockade of the occupied Gaza Strip, which is an integral part of the occupied State of Palestine, constitutes an act of collective punishment of a population and, is, as noted in the report, unlawful. The human rights of people living under this blockade are persistently violated, including their rights to health, to property, to water and sanitation, to an adequate standard of living, to freedom of movement, and to food. Today, over 70% of Gaza's inhabitants are aid-dependent compared to 10% prior to the imposition of the blockade. Over 32% of Gaza's workforce is unemployed. According to OCHA, 57% of Gaza's households are food insecure. Repeated violent Israeli military incursions in Gaza tend to destroy whatever meager progress has been achieved, a phenomenon one can qualify as "de-development".

In this regard, the State of Palestine calls on Member States to uphold their responsibilities and take urgent steps for Israel to lift its siege. We lend our full support to suggestions made, including by Professor Jean Ziegler, that a special procedure be created to report to the Human Rights Council at all sessions on the human rights consequences of unilateral coercive measures.

I thank you for your attention.