*Unofficial Transcript by Human Rights Voices*

November 15, 2016

**379th Meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**

Chair: I declare open the 379th Meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable

Rights of the Palestinian People.

The provisional agenda for the meeting was decided by the Secretariat. If I hear no objections, can I consider that the agenda is adopted?

It is so decided.

If I may, I would now like to inform you briefly about some of the developments that have taken place since our last meeting, which was held on the 3rd of October.

On the 14th of October, the Permanent Missions of Angola, Egypt, Malaysia, Senegal, and Venezuela co-chaired a Security Council Arria-formula meeting on the subject of illegal Israeli settlements, obstacles to peace, and the two-state solution. Briefings by Israeli NGOs such as Americans for Peace Now and B'Tselem were particularly powerful. Most Members States found this meeting very relevant and timely, and its impact is still being felt at many levels.

On the 19th of October, the Security Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. His Excellency, Mr. Mahmoud Saikal, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, made a statement on behalf of the Committee, a copy of which is included in the folder before you. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that on the 28th of October, the Annual Report of the Committee was published as the UN document and all six languages. It can also be found on the UNISPAL website, maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights.

On the 2nd of November, the members of the Bureau held a retreat and discussed the program of the Committee for 2017. Ambassador Inguanez, a rapporteur, will brief you about that in more detail.

On the 27th of October, I was invited to participate in my national capacity in a meeting of the French Initiative in Paris on the Middle East. I was also informed at the time of an upcoming meeting on the 24th of November of the Working Group on Civil Society that Sweden chairs in the framework of the French Initiative on the Middle East process.

Are there any comments or observations on this? I see none.

We could then move on to the next agenda item, entitled The Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Developments in the Political Process.

I would like to give the floor now to her Excellency, Madam Feda Abdelhady Nasser, the Deputy Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations. She will brief us on the most recent events in the occupied Palestinian territory and the political process. You have the floor, ma'am.

State of Palestine: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I extend the apologies of Ambassador Mansour for being absent from this meeting as he is traveling abroad, representing Palestine in international meetings being held this week.

Mr. Chair, in the recent period, as you have just remarked, we have been engaged in numerous debates at the UN, reflecting on the critical situation in occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, as a result of the ongoing illegal policies and practices of Israel, the occupying power against the Palestinian people under its occupation for nearly half a century now.

Humanitarian, economic, social, political, and security conditions remain grave as Israel persists with its violations and as a viable political horizon to bring an end to this injustice remains absent. As you noted, the Security Council held an open debate on the 19th of October, and we’ve also had debates on relevant items regarding the question of Palestine in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee as well as in the Second Committee and statements in the First, Third, and Sixth, along with the important Arria meeting of the Council, convened by five members of the Security Council: Malaysia, Egypt, Angola, Venezuela, and the chair, Senegal.

These have been providing us with opportunities to focus on the violations and the painful plight being endured by the Palestinian people, and also to call, once again, repeatedly for urgent action by the international community firmly based on respect for international law. We are grateful to the Committee for its engagement in the Security Council debate with a principled statement delivered by the Ambassador of Afghanistan as Vice Chair of our committee.

And I’d also like to thank so many members of our committee who participated in that debate and in other deliberations in the main committees. We appeal for such active participation in the coming period when the General Assembly will begin its consideration of the question of Palestine on 29 November. In this regard, I wish to stress how much in need we are with the support of this committee and all this members and observers not just to raise international awareness but to help generate the political will necessary to change the current negative course we are on and ultimately rectify this injustice.

As our various statements and our letters have thoroughly addressed all of these dimensions of this issue, I will just summarize for the Committee the current reality we are facing in the occupied Palestinian territory, a reality that is also covered daily in the news bulletin circulated by the Division for Palestinian Rights, for which we express our thanks.

Since just midyear, since the issuance of the July Quartet report, Israel has advanced construction of over 2,000 units in illegal Israeli settlements throughout the West Bank and particularly in occupied East Jerusalem and surrounding areas. This is further damaging the contiguity and integrity of our land and the viability of our state. As this illegal Israeli colonization campaign presses on, we are all witnessing unprecedented demolition of Palestinian homes, nonstop confiscation of our land, expansion of settlements, including so-called outposts, construction of the annexation wall, forced displacement of civilians, threats by Israeli officials to annex our land, and constant settler violence and terror against our people and destruction of their properties. And all the while the two-state solution for peace, which this committee firmly supports as per relevant UN resolutions and the Madrid Principles and the Arab Peace Initiative, is rapidly diminishing.

We are also witnessing ongoing provocations and incitement against holy sites, especially in occupied East Jerusalem, daily military raids, often resulting in death or injury to our civilians, and ongoing arrest and detention of Palestinians, including children, with more than 7,000 Palestinians now in Israeli captivity.

At the same time, our people are enduring the illegal Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip where 2 million Palestinians are being collectively punished and

dehumanized and repeatedly threatened with attacked by Israeli political and military officials. They are living conditions of extreme deprivation and isolation that has imposed a dire humanitarian crisis and socioeconomic conditions at their lowest point since 1967. And this includes widespread poverty and food insecurity and youth unemployment at a shocking over 60%.

In the midst of the turmoil and radicalization that our region is experiencing, and considering the universal focus on development as a priority for human progress as well as stability and security, we believe that this matter must be of concern for all of us. And here, as we’ve done on numerous occasions in the recent period, we would appeal again today for urgent support to UNRWA from committee members that are able to address the severe funding shortfalls that the Agency is experiencing, which are undermining its humanitarian efforts to alleviate the plight of Palestine refugees in the occupied Palestinian territory, but also throughout the region in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. And these funding shortfalls, if unresolved, will have far-reaching negative consequences. And this was addressed thoroughly in the Fourth Committee.

And, Mr. Chair, this brings me here to our efforts at the UN at this particular period of time. As the international community continues to fail to impose consequences on Israel for its violations, we continue here along with all concerned partners in the global community, to draw attention to these issues and to call for respective international law and our people's rights. And here, I would express Palestine's gratitude again to all delegations that have supported our resolutions that have been recently voted on in the main committees, reaffirming, once again, core principles and rights and provisions.

And I wish to highlight for the Committee some of the significant gains made in the context of these resolutions, and this includes the following.

On Israeli settlements: while the resolution has traditionally been strong and has inter alia reaffirmed all relevant Security Council resolutions and called for their implementation, this year the resolution has been strengthened by clear condemnation of all Israeli settlement activities and a call for consideration of measures of accountability in case of continued noncompliance by Israel, the occupying power. And we believe this is imperative in the context of all of our efforts to address this illegal situation, including in the Security Council.

With regard to the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza: the calls for ending the illegal Israeli blockade and collective punishment of our people have been reiterated along with calls to reverse the de-development trajectory in Gaza, which was underscored by this year's UN Country Team report on Palestine.

As for the resolutions under UNRWA, while reaffirming the rights of the Palestine refugees and renewing the Agency's mandate for another three years, an important call has been made for the UN Secretary-General to facilitate broad consultations with Member States to explore all potential ways and means, including inter alia through voluntary and assess contributions to ensure that the Agency's funding is sufficient and predictable for the duration of its mandate. And the Secretary-General will be asked by the Assembly to report the conclusions of those consultations and recommendations by March 2017.

We urge all members and observers of this committee to back the important call in this resolution in conformity with the affirmation the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants to ensure sustained funding to UNRWA, which is vital to enable it to address our refugees' needs under very difficult circumstances. And we would ask for your active support in the deliberations next year on this matter following issuance of the Secretary-General's report both in the context of the political and financial committees of the Assembly.

Finally, but not the last of the new elements included in this package of resolutions for the 71st Session, is the call to be made in light of the onset of the 50th year of the Israeli occupation for this committee to undertake activities and initiatives in cooperation with governments, relevant organizations of the UN system, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society aimed at ending the occupation and contributing towards a just, lasting, and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all aspects. This is reflected in the drafts now before the Committee, and we hope for your full endorsement and support, including partnerships to advance these efforts, especially considering that no extra resources will be accorded to the Committee from the UN budget in this regard.

While the resolutions have been voted on in the Fourth and Second Committees, again receiving overwhelming support, we would hope for even broader support when these resolutions are voted on by the General Assembly along with the resolutions under the question of Palestine in the situation in the Middle East later this month. We would urge your active presence and participation in those meetings, and in that connection I would also wish to appeal for the continued strong support of all delegations to the resolution on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, which will be voted on in the Third Committee before going to the Assembly. And I would urge co-sponsorship of this important and central resolution for Palestine.

Mr. Chair, lastly, I wish to update the Committee on our efforts regarding the Security Council. We continue to call on the Security Council to act, and Senegal, as Chair of this committee in its national capacity, has been an active partner with us in this effort along with Egypt as the Arab representative on the Council. We call on the Council to act, to end its silence on Palestine, and uphold its Charter duties to maintain international peace and security.

And in addition to the important open debate and Arria meeting held last month and consultations, again, including with members of our committee that are members of the Council, Malaysia, Venezuela, alongside others, we conducted consultations in the framework of the Arab Troika and to urge action, and particularly for a cessation of Israeli settlement activities, preservation of the two-state solution on the 1967 borders, and creation of a viable political horizon that will ultimately bring an end to the occupation and achieve the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people, including to freedom and independence in their state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital and thus achieving a just and lasting peace and security.

In this regard, I wish to point out to the Committee that today, 15 November, is the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine, which was proclaimed in 1988 in Algiers, 28 years ago. This anniversary, among all of the important and painful anniversaries that are approaching, remind us how long the struggle of the Palestinian people for their right to self-determination and justice has been, and hopefully will help revive international support and solidarity and efforts to finally realize our rights. We are grateful for the principled positions reaffirmed by so many of your delegations in this regard in the recent period, and we will continue to seek your guidance and support in the critical months ahead.

As we continue our efforts in the General Assembly, we await a decision from the Arab Ministerial Committee as to the timing of next steps regarding the Security Council. At the same time, we continue to support and cooperate with the French efforts, which you referred to, Mr. Chair, which are ongoing for the convening of an international peace conference as well as the efforts of Egypt and the Russian Federation to facilitate dialogue and peace efforts.

In closing, Mr. Chair, I would like to renew our appreciation to the Chair and the Bureau and all members and observers of the Committee for their constant solidarity and support to Palestine, and I look forward to hearing your views and feedback during this meeting, including in our discussion regarding the agenda for 2017 as we seek to advance initiatives to make it a year that will indeed contribute to bringing an end to the Israeli occupation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair: I’d like to thank her Excellency for her presentation. And I would like to take the opportunity to wish a happy birthday. We've missed the symbolic date, which is in our report, and we hope that the 15th of November 2017 will see the end of the occupation.

Are there any questions or comments on the presentation that Madam Ambassador has just given? That seems not to be the case.

Venezuela, you have the floor.

BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF Venezuela: Thank you, sir. Good morning. We would like to thank the Distinguished Ambassador of Abdelhady Nasser for her briefing, and we're taking the floor because we understand that the initiative of the Security Council Resolution on the issue of the illegal Israeli settlements is under consideration of the Council of Ministers of the Arab League. And we'd like to know what the current situation is in the context of the Council in the Arab League on the draft resolution.

Every day the situation is becoming increasingly critical with regard to the Israeli illegal settlements, especially so if one takes into account that steps are being taken at the administrative level, at the judiciary and the parliamentary levels in Israel so that the occupying power can legalize, at least from its point of view, legalize the Israeli settlement.

Venezuela would like to call everyone's attention to the fact that we need to bear in mind that at this moment in time in the Security Council there is a correlation of force which is perspicuous to a constructive discussion and possible favorable position with regard to the settlements. So it's an opportunity that we should not let slip by, especially since we're coming to an end of the – end of Obama's presidency in the United States and that might create a climate which is a little different in terms of looking at the settlements and trying to get some concrete results.

Also, if there were a decision handed down by the Security Council or a resolution were approved, that would be enough in the discussion and in the voting of Security Council to make the topic of the settlements much more visible and to make the discussion about it at that level for relevant.

So we would like to know what the current state of play is with regard to the Arab League's discussions on this matter with a view to see if we can push this forward before the end of the year; see if we could push forward a resolution on the settlements.

And finally, we’d like to take this opportunity, of course, to congratulate everyone for today, 15th of November, the Declaration of Independence of Palestine. It's a very important day, and we would like to applaud all the Palestinians and the Mission, congratulate them here in the United Nations. And we’d like to, as I've said before, Mr. Chairman, say that we hope there'll be some sort of concrete and resounding action taken by all states to complement the declarations that have been made that we all please take into account, especially since this is a very important anniversary year. And this committee believes it's a good time to be very active and we in Venezuela would like to contribute from our hearts to the extent possible and hope that next year there will be a great deal of activity in order to emphasize the issue and raise awareness about the Palestinian situation for the world. Especially we hope that by this time next year we’ll be able to celebrate a free and unoccupied Palestinian state.

Thank you.

Chair: I thank the Representative of Venezuela for his statement. Are there any other requests for the floor? If not, we will move on to the next item on our agenda.

Palestine, you have the floor.

State of Palestine: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to thank the Delegation of Venezuela for the words of congratulations and support and just to briefly address the issue that he raised the question about in terms of the consideration of the mobilization towards the Security Council by the Arab Ministers. A meeting date has not yet been set, however, a request has been made by Palestine for this meeting, and hopefully it will be convened in the near future. And of course, we would continue to work with all of our partners on the Security Council to address this issue, and we would continue to update and seek the support of the Committee members. Thank you.

Chair: Thank you very much, Ambassador. We will now move on to the next item on our agenda on the draft resolution on the question of Palestine. You have before you the four draft resolutions to be submitted to the General Assembly under Agenda item 35, Entitled Question of Palestine. The Ambassador of Palestine has already commented on these, and I think it's not necessary to go into the content of these resolutions once again. Just like to express the hope that the draft on the division of the special programs being distributed in October as well as the draft on the Committee, which has been revised, in particular in its paragraph 10, whether as a proposal that 2017 should be the year that marks the end of the Israeli occupation. Modifications have also been made to the resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. There are then also amendments in the text.

Are there any comments on the draft resolutions? I see none. May I take it that the committee wishes to approve the four draft resolutions for submission to the General Assembly?

It is so decided.

I believe that the Committee has just approved realistic and reasonable drafts, which should receive, as they have in the past, a large measure of support in the General Assembly. Delegations that intend to become cosponsors of these four draft resolutions, and have not yet signed on, may sign the text once this meeting has been adjourned by contacting the Palestine Observer Mission as soon as possible.

We shall now move to the next item on our agenda, update from the Rapporteur on the Bureau Retreat held on 2nd of November, 2016. I give the floor to Ambassador Inguanez, our rapporteur.

Before giving him the floor, however, I would like to stress the importance of this exercise in improving the Committee's impact and effectiveness in the implementation of its mandate. We took some important decisions on innovative ways of working and on better ways of advocating the Palestinian cause. A copy of the decisions and questions that were discussed is included in the envelopes before you.

Let me now give the floor to Ambassador Carmelo Inguanez. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Ambassador Carmelo Inguanez, Rapporteur: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and gentlemen, I have the pleasure of providing an update on the Bureau Retreat held on 2nd November, 2016. This was the second Bureau meeting of this kind following last year's retreat, and there is a consensus among Bureau members that this is a valuable exercise intended to take stock of lessons learned from previous activities as well as devote time to brainstorm on how best to implement the Committee's mandate to maximize its impact.

The Retreat's constructive discussions revolved around three main themes: program assessment and planning for 2017 activities, engagement by the Committee, and the communication outreach strategy. The Secretariat has already distributed the list of the decisions adopted by the Bureau as well, as additional ideas for further actions. I will focus on the main points and I would invite other committee members to express their views at the end of my presentation.

As outlined by the Chair when updating on the draft resolutions, the General Assembly is expected to authorize the Committee to collaborate with member states to organize activities in 2017 to mark the 50th year of the start of the occupation with a view to end it. The Bureau views favorably the proposal from the State of Palestine to frame committee activities in 2017 under the theme of the International Year to end the Israeli Occupation. This proposal will be put for adoption at an upcoming meeting of the committee. All members and observers of the Committee should plan national activities in 2017 to underscore this theme.

Regarding the 2017 program of work, the Bureau approved the following proposals:

One, to organize a committed delegation visit to Nicaragua and other key Central American Caribbean countries in early February 2017.

Two, in cooperation with ESCWA to hold a capacity building seminar on SDGs for Palestinian card in March 2017, either in Oman or in Beirut.

Three, to organize a joint conference with the OIC on Jerusalem in spring 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Four, to organize an event commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Israeli occupation, including governments and high-level UN officials as well as a separate meeting with civil society both at UN headquarters in New York in June 2017.

And five, to organize a delegation visit to Africa. The location and dates are to be determined in the near future.

The Bureau also decided to continue and expand the early capacity building program for Palestinian card such as the training for Palestinian diplomats in Europe and Geneva, or other training with relevant and current focus such as on water diplomacy, water conflict management, or other topics related to the SDG's Agenda 2030. These programs have proven very valuable for Palestinian staff of different ministries.

The Bureau also discussed the advantage of framing additional capacity building and other events, including on human rights within a south-south and triangular cooperation perspective. Moreover, Bureau members discussed the need to increase participation by Member States at Committee's meetings and activities and enhance cooperation and information sharing. In this vein, it was decided to include Committee members and the delegation participating to international Committee activities. More active participation by Committee members would also be encouraged at Committee meetings at UN headquarters in the form of regular updates as we are doing today.

Committee members could also be asked to partner, co-chair in activities at UN headquarters, or host capacity building activities in their own countries. The Bureau also encourages all Committee members and observers to share in this forum their initiatives in support of the peace process, as well as any other activity promoting the resolution of the question of Palestine.

In addition, the Bureau viewed favorably the State of Palestine's request to consider its status in the Committee changed from observer to member, possibly on 29 November 2016. In the coming weeks, the Chair will send a letter and a form to all Committee members to solicit inputs and suggestions for Committee's activities and inform of national activities plan for 2017.

Finally, the Bureau discussed the need for Committee's communication strategy with clear messages and sustained consistently as a means to enhance advocacy and outreach. It was decided that in order to target the crucial U.S. audience, the Committee should respond positively to invitations for speaking engagements in U.S. universities and other audiences in cooperation with the Mission of Palestine.

These are some of the changes envisaged by the Bureau related to working methods and future activities of the Committee. While we hope Committee members and observers will be able to support these decisions, we encourage all of you to share additional ideas and concrete proposals to make this Committee an active and tool to advance the goal of an independent State of Palestine.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair: I thank the Ambassador for his statement. Are there any comments regarding his briefing? If there are no further comments, we shall move on to the next item on our agenda, Updates From the Working Group.

Namibia, you have the floor.

Namibia: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, and thank you to our very able Rapporteur, the PR of Malta. I didn't want to let this item go by, Mr. Chairperson, without a comment, because I feel that it was very important the decisions that we made. And I really think that one of the main aspects of the retreat was to seek ways in which we could find more active participation from the Committee members.

And so I just wanted to take the floor to stress that, to stress to the Committee members that please find ways of engaging with the program and that we hope that one of – and Committee members are being asked to take note that we're meeting in this room because we feel that we want to start meeting in more intimate setting so that we could get a greater flow of ideas and activity and action by the entire Committee. And I wanted to just put emphasis on that so that Committee members can also see that they should look at the activities that the Bureau proposed and see which ways they could volunteer themselves, which way they would be prepared to engage and make that known to the Bureau.

Thank you.

Chair: Thank you, Representative Scott, for your comments. Any other comments? We will now move on to the next item. This is on the updates from the Working Group of the Committee. We will now hear back from Mr. David Mansfield, the Deputy Permanent Representative and Chair of the Working Group of the Committee about the latest activities of the group.

Mr. Mansfield, you have the floor.

David Mansfield, Chair of the Working Group of the Committee: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At the outset and in my national capacity, I wish to congratulate Palestine on its 20th anniversary of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence.

Excellencies, colleagues, I wish to brief you on the activities by the Working Group. I wish to start off with the briefing on the human rights situation in the oPt, including the use of excessive force by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Al-Haq. The Working Group organized a briefing on 18th October 2016 by expert speakers from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International and Al-Haq on the current human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The briefing was well attended. However, I would like to take this opportunity to call on all members of the Working Group to attend these events and actively participate as well.

During the meeting, Omar Shakir, Human Rights Watch's Israel Palestine's Country Director, called the Member States to ensure that businesses stop operating in, financing, servicing, or trading with Israeli settlements in order to comply with their obligations under international law and human rights law. Human Rights Watch suggested that aid to Israel be reduced in the amount it spends on settlements.

Amnesty International, represented by researcher Jacob Burns, called for the international community to suspend the sale of arms to Israel, which it used to violate Palestinian human rights. Israel has on paper a robust system to investigate abuses by its military. In practice, it fails to deliver accountability. This was the results concluded by Amnesty. Aseil Abu-Baker and Marya Farah from Al-Haq raised concerns about the use of house demolitions and the refusal of the Israeli authorities to hand over bodies of Palestinians killed during alleged attacks. All speakers agreed that Israel must act to ensure unlawful killings of Palestinians by Israeli forces are fully and effectively investigated. Each reiterated that impunity for Israeli forces must end.

I wish to turn now to the Strategy for Cooperation of the Working Group with Civil Society Organizations. The strategy was prepared on the basis of input from the Working Group, in particular, recommendations brought forward during the brainstorming session that took place earlier this year. The document was adopted under a silence procedure. The Strategy comprises of four pillars, which I will now list out. Number one, it envisaged that action by CSOs will influence UN Member States to increase support for Palestinian rights. This would be achieved by organizing film screenings, high-profile CSO briefings at the UN HQ, and side events at major UN summits or anniversaries by engaging with media and high-profile personalities.

Second, the Strategy would promote stronger action by civil society in their own domestic arenas in support for Palestinian rights.

Third, it is expected that the Working Group contributes to enhanced effective coordination between civil society organizations by organizing a periodic CSO conference and providing an online platform for CSOs.

Fourth, the Working Group will work to increase awareness among CSOs and the Palestinian public about the work of the Committee and the Working Group.

For these goals to be achieved, it is important that members of the Working Group, which encompasses all the members and observers of this Committee, participate actively in its work. That being said, we failed to reach a quorum on two separate occasions and we were – were held informal discussions instead.

During that discussion, several speakers noted that the impact of the statements made by CSOs at the recent Arria-Formula meeting underline the importance of cooperation with those organizations. It was also suggested that the Working Group seek greater engagement, Israeli CSOs, and facilitate increased dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian civil society. Cooperation with CSOs, it was argued, should be based on points of convergence rather than complete agreement on all issues, such as the two-state solution.

It was also proposed that the Working Group should do more to provide a platform for Palestinian women and youth to share their perspectives. The Working Group should also focus its activities on raising awareness in countries where public knowledge of the reality on the ground is particularly low.

I thank you for your attention.

Chair: Thank you very much for the update, Mr. Mansfield, and for your efforts in leading the Working Group. Are there any comments on Mr. Mansfield's presentation?

If there are no further comments, then we shall move on to the next item on our agenda, updates from Member States on their activities related to the question of Palestine. The floor is open to anyone who wants to update the Committee on recent activities, initiatives, or meetings undergone by members and observers of the Committee in the past few months.

Since I was invited to participate myself in the brainstorming meeting in Paris that the French authorities organized on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, I myself will make some comments.

This was indeed, as the title of the meeting suggests, an interactive exchange, a brainstorming session between States, international organizations, in particular, the OIC, the UN, and the EU and also the League of Arab States. And there were also representatives of civil society.

The French and [Ambassador Vimeau] wanted to see to what extent the Member States and international organizations and civil society were working for the rights of the Palestinian people and to explore the economic aspects of the issue in order to, and I quote, "encourage the parties, but in particular, the Israeli party, to commit yet further to a path of negotiation to save the two-state solution." There were expert statements delivered that I am not going to attempt to summarize here, but the idea was to demonstrate something, to demonstrate that through economic means and through investment, through respect for sustainable development, the two-state solution can still be saved and that the two parties, mainly the occupying power, would ultimately benefit from an independent and free Palestinian state that could cooperate in a productive fashion with the Israeli natives.

Civil society called for the boycott and sanctions. Representatives of States were of the view that if we look at the major programs that the international community negotiated in 2015 and also this year, by which I mean the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and also the international conference that was held in Addis Ababa on the Action Agenda, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Paris Conference and the subsequent agreement on climate change, and also more recently, the Quito Summit on Sustainable Urban Development, if we look at all of these different conferences, at every turn, there was a special section devoted to the situation in Palestine.

If we really want to have peaceful societies, if we really want to ensure that we leave no one behind, then in this part of the world the state of Palestine must be able to exercise all of its rights within safe and recognized borders. There were also proposals on the targeting of multinationals, multinational companies, who work in the occupied state in order to make it clear to them that this is illegal business, this is exploitation. There was also another approach taken. That was to indicate that from a moral and political point of view, there are guiding principles on companies or for companies and multinationals when it comes to their respect for human rights, the Principles of Business and Human Rights.

All these programs and these instruments and initiatives were examined to see to what extent this initiative in Paris could make a contribution for the conference on the issue that Paris intends to hold by the end of the year. By and large then, these were the issues that were discussed in Paris. There was no summary of the discussion. The French organizers are looking for ideas and proposals to further reinforce their own action and to contribute to this international conference that they aim to organize by the end of the year.

I'd like particularly to mention the Egyptian initiative. The Egyptian representative provided information on this at the Paris meeting. This was on the Egyptian efforts on the issue. There are also efforts made by the Russian Federation. We haven't yet received a summary of the work from Paris, but these are some of the areas that the brainstorming meeting focused on and gives you some idea of the line of thinking.

Are there any other delegations who would like to share information? I recognize the Ambassador of the OIC. You have the floor, sir.

Organisation of islamic cooperation: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would like to brief the meeting about three important contributions by the OIC in this regard. The first one is that on 19th of October, the OIC met at the ministerial level in Uzbekistan and adopted four important resolutions in support of Palestine. The first one was dedicated to Jerusalem. Another one on the peace process, a third on different aspects of the Palestinian cause, and the fourth was on the economic support to Palestine. While these resolutions are adopted on annual basis, the language was different this time and reflected a different kinds of support to Palestine at all levels.

The second thing that I'd like to brief the meeting on is the activities of the OIC office in Ramallah. This is a new office that we opened recently and the office has engaged recently in different partnerships with the civil society, mainly in Jerusalem, with a special focus on the sectors that we have identified in the OIC as priorities, including youth, housing, and education.

In addition, our office in Ramallah has also been active in raising funds for a goods fund actually, and has visited at least four of our Member States and the money raised will be used to support the sectors that I have just mentioned. And I think a good portion of them will go towards the education.

The last item is that we will be discussing soon, with the Division of Palestine, our forthcoming meeting on Jerusalem which will be held in Astana hopefully next April or May.

Thank you so much.

Chair: Thank you, Ambassador. I now give the floor to the Representative of Venezuela.

BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF Venezuela: Thank you, sir. Just briefly, I'd like to refer to activities of Member States under this item agenda with regard to the Palestine state. A very, very brief report of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's government activities in working with the Palestinian Embassy in Venezuela and some of the activities include, for example, participation in the [Women Producers Fair] organized in March on the International Day of Women, organized by the Ministry for Gender Equality, and there was a Palestine site at this fair. Also, there was a floral offering for the artistic, the creative awards, and also groups of civil society that support the Palestine cause.

In May of this year, of course, we highlighted the inauguration of the new Palestinian embassy site in Venezuela. That was an opportunity for a meeting of foreign ministers of Venezuela and Palestine. In addition to expressing solidarity for the Palestinian cause, They also explored possibility of possible cooperation in mining and pharmaceuticals between the two countries.

And there was also the [World Day of Alcouts], celebrated in Caracas with various events. And of course we couldn't not mention the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement Countries whereby Venezuela, not just made public its national position on this matter but it also promoted, in the context of the annual summit, promoted active discussion and exchange of views on supporting the Palestinian cause. This, of course, is in addition to the other activities such as participation of the Representative of Palestine in the World Festival for Poetry and other festivals in our country. This is indicative of Venezuela's commitment to the struggle of the Palestinian people and also to reiterate from this podium our commitment to work both nationally and multilaterally and make all possible efforts to support the Palestinian cause. Thank you very much, sir.

Chair: I thank the Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for that statement. If there are no other requests for the floor? We'll then move on to the next item of the agenda, which is Other Matters.

Before I give the floor to delegations wishing to speak under this item, I have a couple of announcements I'd like to make on upcoming activities. During our last meeting, I referenced the annual training program for staff of the Palestinian government, which is conducted by the Division for Palestinian Rights. Today, I, with pleasure would like to present this year's two trainees, [Madam Zeena Mushashi] and [Mr. Ameed Amir]. Please kindly stand up so that our committee can see you, [Mr. Amir and Miss Mushashi]. Here are two trainees for this year. They arrived here on the 17th of October and will remain with us until the 2nd of December. I would like to, on behalf of everyone here, wish you every success in working through the challenging curriculum of the program.

As you know, the training program for the staff of the Palestinian government conducted by the division also includes a three-week training course to take place in the UN office in Geneva from the 21st of November to the 9th of December. The training will include attendance at the 63rd Session of the Trade and Development Board. In addition, briefings by various offices of the UN and agencies in Geneva will also be organized. [Miss Nadeen Ahneed Kaleev Husari], diplomatic attaché in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the State Palestine, has been selected for participation in this program in Geneva.

Another training program conducted by the division of UNESCO-IHE, this is training on water conflict management, which will be organized in cooperation with the Institute for Water Education in Delft in Ramallah from the 20th to 23rd of November in the State of Palestine.

A political affairs officer from the Division for Palestinian Rights, [Mr. Obeena Okanga], will travel to Ramallah later today with a view to making preparations for and participating in the training seminar as well as holding consultative meetings with counterparts with the Palestinian Authority and UNTSO. These and other programs are being organized as part of the division's efforts to expand the capacity building program for staff of the Palestinian government as mandated by numerous GA resolutions.

I'd like to remind you that the Special Meeting of the Committee to Observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People will take place in two weeks. In other words, the 29th of November from 10:00 to 1:00 in the Trusteeship Council Chamber of the Conference Building. Invitations to attend this commemorative event have already been sent to all Member States and observers. In view of the particular importance attached to this annual event and in keeping with established practice, I would like to request all members and observers of the Committee to be represented at this meeting at the ambassadorial level.

I would also like to remind you that in the same invitation letter, we requested heads of state or government to send messages of solidarity. It would be appreciated if the messages could be set to the Secretariat by the 28th of November at the latest. The division will post all messages on the Committee's website at unispal.un.org and make them publicly available in their original languages on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity.

I would like to appeal to all committee members and observers to actively participate in the debate on the Agenda item 35, Question of Palestine, at the General Assembly plenary. This debate will take place on the afternoon of the 29th November.

Also through your bilateral contracts and in the framework of the groups to which you belong, I would ask that you please encourage non-committee members to do the same. Of course, the culmination of this process will be voting on the draft resolutions, that vote should take place on Wednesday, 30 November, and I am sure that all members and observers will be there to cast a vote in support of the resolutions, as well as the Ambassador of Palestine.

Finally, on the 29th of November in the evening, the committee will, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine open an exhibit entitled Palestinian Embroidery: Threads of Continuity Identity and Empowerment which will take place at 6:30 at the Visitors Lobby of the General Assembly building. There will also be a dabke troupe performing at the opening. Again, we hope to see you there en masse.

Would any delegation like to take the floor to raise any issues under Other Matters? I see none. I'm sorry, Palestine?

STATE OF Palestine: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for your briefings and also for the contributions by other delegations here from the OIC and Venezuela. I just wanted to make one last note under Other Matters regarding the draft resolutions under the Question of Palestine, item 35, that were just endorsed by the Committee. My colleague is here with the cosponsor sheet, so at the end of this meeting, any delegation that is able to sign the cosponsor sheets, we would be grateful for that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chair: Thank you. Has Senegal cosponsored? Not yet. Thank you.

On that note, then, if everyone would be so kind as to sponsor, to cosponsor the resolutions, the session is adjourned if there are no other matters to address.

Thank you, one and all.