*Unofficial Transcript by Human Rights Voices*

April 7, 2016

**“376th Meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People”**

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro, vice chair of committee: Good afternoon, Distingushed Delegates. I declare open that the 376th meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The provisional agenda for the meeting has been distributed by the Secretariat. If I hear no objections, the agenda is adopted. Adopted. It is so decided.

Before we proceed with the agenda, allow me on behalf of the Committee to welcome His Excellency, Mr. Dian Triansyah Djani of Indonesia, and His Excellency, Mr. Mohamed Lemine El Haycen of Mauritania, who have recently taken up their posts here in New York. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to extend our welcome to you amongst the members and observers of this Committee and express our best wishes for your important work. I am certain that you will continue the exceptional engagement and support the Committee has received from your predecessors in pursuit of its mandate. Welcome both of you.

Are there any questions or comments?

Let's now move on to the next agenda item, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and developments in the political process. I would like to give the floor to His Excellency, Mr. Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine. Excellency, you have the floor.

Ambassador Riyad Mansour, Permanent observer of the state of palestine: Thank you very much, María, and through you, I just want to say that thank you for convening this meeting, and I want to associate myself with your comment in welcoming both of our colleagues to New York.

I met the new Ambassador of Mauritania. But I will be hopefully meeting, I think tomorrow if I'm not mistaken, I will be meeting with the new Ambassador of Indonesia. I am eager to meet with him and to work with him. Indonesia is one of the key pillars of our Committee and our Bureau, and we just had not too long ago a very successful meeting on Jerusalem in Jakarta. And our colleague, Desra, and of course his entire team, were very instrumental in the success of that meeting, and we are looking forward to our new colleague from Indonesia. I am sure that he will be working with the same enthusiasm and energy in our Committee and in our Bureau.

Also let me officially congratulate Elio on his official announcement of his position as the Chief of the Division. He has been the Acting Chief of the Division for some time, but now it is official, and congratulations. We have tested you during this course and we concur with the Secretariat in that very appropriate decision.

We will continue to cooperate with you. And on behalf of the Palestinian people and their leadership, we want to put in the record that we do appreciate the work of the Division under your leadership and your entire team. We know them well, and they are a remarkable team in doing all the things that need to be done in fulfilling the mandate of the Committee as articulated by the resolutions of the General Assembly.

In this connection, also I want to welcome the new secretary of the Committee, a newcomer, and we are delighted to see her in this place. I think that the Division now is fully brassed with the generals and colonels and lieutenant colonels and all the officers that we need so that we can shift gears as we move forward.

Having said all these things, let me just say that we have been informing all of you on regular basis through the letters that we sent on the average of once a week to the Security Council, to the Secretary General. And these documents, they are published as official documents of the United Nations. And the Division, they place them on their UNISPAL. So in terms of the details of documenting the crimes committed by Israel on a daily basis against the Palestinian people in the occupied territory, you have been given the details on a regular basis.

But also let me just emphasize that on the issue of the viciousness of the Israeli occupying army and the settlers in being trigger-happy and accelerating this illegal behavior of extrajudicial execution, this behavior, we cannot just only observe it by condemning it and asking the Security Council to act, and the Security Council is not shouldering its responsibility in this connection. We have been saying for a while that the Security Council has shouldered its responsibility with regard to protection and they have to engage in informal discussions and certain kinds of formal discussions, such as the Arria Formula, which is an unofficial open meeting of the Security Council where we bring experts to give presentations about a specific issue in this regard, providing protection to the civilian population under occupation. And then members of the Security Council can say whatever they want to say and it will be open for the public and for the media.

We believe that after this intensification of the Israeli occupying authorities against our people, including the assassination of one of our young Palestinians in Hebron, Al-Khalil, in which B'Tselem, an Israeli organization, documented through video the assassination of a wounded Palestinian laid on the ground, not bringing ambulances to help him, an Israeli soldier put a bullet in his head and executed him in that manner, and that went viral. I'm sure that all of you were able to see that.

This is not but one example that made the issue of protection more urgent than ever. And through our coordination with our friends in the Security Council and our brothers, the Representative of Egypt, we agreed that hopefully maybe today or tomorrow a date will be set for an Arria Formula on protection in the Security Council in which an open, but not official, meeting to take place and to discuss this phenomena with the view of maximizing the pressure on this illegal behavior of the Israeli occupying authority in order not only to stop it, but also to bring the perpetrators to face justice.

Of course this is along with our activities with the ICC in terms of seeing that the prosecutor to move soon into an official investigation about war crimes committed against the Palestinian people, whether during the war in Gaza or through the continuing crime of settlements.

So that this is at least one thing that will be taking place. And our brothers in Egypt, they are consulting through the mechanisms of the Security Council to set the date for these activities. There are members of this Committee, I think Senegal and Malaysia and Venezuela and others, who would, I am sure, would be eager to join with Egypt in calling for this Arria Formula on protection.

And once we know the exact date, we hope, as I said, within the next 24 hours that we will know the exact date based on the schedule of the Security Council. Then all of you will be informed and we need to have a large presence of all of you and others in the room when the Arria Formula and protection to take place.

In this connection, let me just illustrate two things. One, that there was Security Council Resolutions in the past, 605 and 904, indicating that protection should be provided to the Palestinian civilian population until the end of occupation. The other thing that there was a study that we've requested, President Abbas requested from the SG, which was compiled by the legal department of the United Nations and was released to the Security Council last October under the Presidency of Spain. And it is an available document, so these materials will be some of the basis where the experts and members of the Security Council will dwell on with regard to providing protection for the Palestinian civilian population until the end of the occupation.

The other thing that I want to bring to your attention, that there will be an open meeting in the Security Council on the 18th of this month, open debate under the Chinese Presidency. I urge the largest number of you to participate in this debate to concentrate on the situation of the Palestinian people under occupation, emphasizing the need of providing international protection and also emphasizing again, reiterating the position, which was highlighted in a strong way in the open debate on the 26th of January of this year, that settlements are illegal and major obstacle to peace.

And in this regard we are consulting with our brothers, with Egypt and also with certain ministerial committees, Arab committees that are in charge of the file of the subject of ending occupation and independence of the State of Palestine to see that the Security Council to act on settlements.

In this regard, I am sure that by now there are no secrets when you have meeting of 20-some ambassadors, like the Arab Group, in which we had discussions. We are consulting on a draft. I don't know, maybe some of you might receive that draft from some of your friends in the Arab Group, but I'm just telling you that so that not to accuse me or accuse Egypt or others that we are doing something, even although it is inside the Arab house, without informing you. You are our friends. You are on board with us. I am informing you in this regard and hopefully soon that we will move into very intensive consultation with all members of the Security Council on the subject of settlements.

Our simple premise is this: if there is unanimity in the Security Council that settlements are illegal, an obstacle to peace, then it is the duty of the Security Council to act. To act through a resolution demanding the secession of this illegal behavior of Israel if we want to help the French initiative, which is the third subject that is on the table that being discussed by leaders in the Middle East and beyond, and even among members of the Security Council.

We do support the French initiative to convene an international conference and we believe an action by the Security Council through adoption of a resolution in settlements is an investment in the peace in the French initiative. And it is helping it to move forward because if the Security Council to pronounce itself in a collective way on a subject that there is unanimous position, such as settlements, then that would allow for opening meaningful doors for the French initiative to move forward.

This is our intention, this is our position, and we've been saying that to many of you for a long period of time, and we need to move and to act soon in this regard by the Security Council. We cannot accept that the Security Council to remain frozen and paralyzed and not to do anything. It is our duty as Palestinians and representative of our heroic people to act, to do something, and also it is our duty as Arabs, including our brothers in Egypt, to try to do something in the Security Council. We hope that we succeed, but if we do not succeed, those who obstruct the Security Council from shouldering their responsibility will be responsible for this obstruction.

So we want to make these things crystal clear as we carry out our responsibilities and duties and you are partners with us and we invite you to play a very active role in advancing these issues on protection, on settlements in the debate on the 18, and supporting the French initiative in convening an international conference.

These are basically the summation of the political things that I wanted to share with you. The situation on the ground is very volatile, explosive. Mr. Lykketoft made a statement just recently. He said that it has been six months since the beginning of this current uprising of the youth and we don't see progress on the political front. Even on the Gaza front there was an action by the Israeli side of suspending importation of cement to reconstruction in Gaza, and that would push the situation into a catastrophic level. We need that to be lifted, and that the UN needs to find ways to resume the shipment of all the materials needed for the reconstruction in the Gaza Strip.

Also that Israel occupying authorities suspended providing electricity for a period of time, against our people in Bethlehem, under so many different pretexts, but these steps today, they were reversed and electricity has been resumed to be provided to Bethlehem and to the adjacent areas around Bethlehem.

Let me just conclude by saying that in a span of three weeks, we are going to have our third international conference on Jerusalem, this time in Africa, in Dakar, the capital of Senegal, and of course this is also—it will coincide with convening the meeting in the continent of Africa.

We are so eager to the success of this conference, and we are working very hard, all of us—the Committee, the Bureau, the Division—in order to make this conference a very successful one, and continuing to concentrate our efforts to shed light on the importance of Jerusalem, and trying not to allow extremist Jewish groups and gangs from dragging us into a religious confrontation over the holy site in al-Aqsa Mosque and al-Haram ash-Sharif.

In this connection, I am delighted to announce to you that our leadership is going to implement, in Senegal, a promise that we made to give special recognition to all previous—to all Chairs of Ambassadors from Senegal who served as Chair of the Committee since its inception during the last 40 years, those who are alive and those who passed away, in recognition and appreciation of the leadership of Senegal in leading this Committee.

And we are coordinating with the Foreign Ministry of Senegal as to exactly where that ceremony will take place. And I am sure that those of us—of you—who will be with us in Senegal, we will be privileged to be witness to that important ceremony. This is part of what I have been promising for some time about recognizing and appreciating the effort of the Chairman, the Vice Chairs, and all of the leadership of this Committee and the Bureau, in serving Palestine.

This is just only a small token in saying thank you to you, and I’m sure that others will be also—we will be expressing our gratitude in time in a proper way to them.

Thank you very much, Madame Chair.

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: Thank you very much, Riyad, for your most valuable and informative briefing, especially the initiatives that you have informed us about today, and that I am sure the whole of the Committee will support them, as always. Are there any questions?

If there are no questions, we shall move to the next item on our agenda: Report on the United Nations Round Table on Legal Aspects of the Question of Palestine, held from 15th to 17th March, 2016 in Amman, Jordan.

From 15th to 17th March, the United Nations Round Table on Legal Aspects of the Question of Palestine was organized in Amman under the auspices of the Committee. A copy of the German summary has been made available by the Secretariat in the folder before you, and Ambassador Grima, Rapporteur of the Committee, shall report shortly on the outcome of that round table.

I would like to mention that in Amman, Ambassador Fodé Seck and Ambassador Riyad Mansour also had a bilateral meeting with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Jordan, Dr. Wasfi Ayad, Director of Human Rights Department; Mr. Mohammed Abu-Wandi, Director of Negotiations, Coordination Bureau; and Mr. Sleyman Arariat, Acting Director of the Legal Department.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Grima to read the report on behalf of Ambassador Fodé Seck. Excellency, you have the floor.

Ambassador Christopher Grima of Malta, Rapporteur: Thank you. Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor to report to the Committee on the United Nations Round Table on Legal Aspects of the Question of Palestine, with the theme, instruments, and institutions of international treaty law, theory and practice, held in Amman, Jordan on 15 to 17 March, 2016.

The Committee was represented by Ambassador Mansour and Ambassador Seck. For part of the round table, the Ambassador of Indonesia for Jordan and the State of Palestine, his Excellency Mr. Teguh Wardoyo, also attended.

Let me reiterate our sincere gratitude to the government of Jordan, an observer of this Committee, to the Division for Palestinian Rights, and to the UNDP team in Amman for their work and support.

As a capacity-building initiative by the Committee, the legal round table aimed at developing the expertise of the Palestinian government staff in the field of international treaty law, including provisions, mechanisms for implementation, reporting obligations, and other practices. To that end, the meeting brought together 25 Palestinian cadres from various ministries and entities of the State of Palestine and the Independent Commission on Human Rights, with leading international scholars as well as experienced UN human rights practitioners.

Over the three days in Amman, participants reviewed the fundamentals of international treaty law theory and its institutional framework, and discussed the current status of the State of Palestine, in relation to international legal instruments, particularly in light of the recent accession of the State of Palestine to a number of such instruments.

Among the session topics were: International Treaty Law and Institutions: Challenges for Emerging States; From Reporting to Implementation: Human Rights Treaties and the State of Palestine; International Environmental Law; and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. A special session was delegated to the important issue of incorporating gender perspective in treaty implementation and reporting.

In conversations with participants during the round table, as well as in the evaluation forms collected by the Division after the event, the Palestinian officials expressed that this exercise was of great benefit for their daily work, particularly ensuring respect for human rights under the national law, and for better fulfilling Palestine’s international human rights obligations.

Participants also voiced a strong desire for future, additional capacity-building efforts by the Committee in a variety of fields. The Committee would like to thank all participants for their valuable contributions, which will be taken into consideration in planning our future activities.

In the margins of the round table, as you have already heard from our Chair, the Committee delegation held a bilateral meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan, in which the Committee expressed its deep appreciation for the strong support shown by Jordan for Palestinian people to achieve their inalienable rights, and both sides discussed opportunities for mutual cooperation in the future.

I thank you.

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: I would like to thank Ambassador Grima for delivering the report. Are there any questions or comments on the report?

Ambassador Mansour, you have the floor.

Ambassador Riyad Mansour: Thank you. I want to thank Ambassador Grima for reporting to us about the Chairman’s summary and also the meeting in Amman. In this connection, we are grateful for all the help that the government of Jordan have provided to us, and also for the very constructive meeting that we had in the Foreign Ministry with the people in the Legal and the Human Rights department.

And also, I want also to put in the record, our appreciation to Ambassador Dina Kawar and their team in New York for facilitating everything that led to the success of this round table.

For me, it was really thrilling to see 25 young Palestinian cadres—most of them are lawyers, half of them are women and the other half men—eager to learn, eager to build the infrastructure of the State of Palestine in their fields, in the Foreign Ministry and different ministries. And it was a very inspiring encounter, and it showed me a high level of seriousness and readiness to learn.

And I spoke with many of them individually at the end, and they were extremely inspired by all the things that they have learned from these very three intensive days of discussions, with outstanding experts who came from all corners of the globe, including from the UN system itself in the Legal department and the Human Rights department.

These experiences are helping us tremendously. And we started, even from before Amman, to think of the next round table or whatever we will decide on, and expanding our capacity in so many different fields, not only in the legal field, which I believe that we’ve done a sufficient amount of training sessions and round tables—in Amman, in The Hague, in Geneva, just only to name a few places—covering subjects, as I mentioned, including subjects related to Palestinian prisoners.

Now we are considering other important issues to us and expanding cadres in other areas, perhaps under the general umbrella of the developmental agenda. Agenda 2030, finance for development, SDGs, goals, targets, climate change, law of the sea—all these issues. We need to expand our capacity and our cadres in these fields, as we have concentrated in expanding our cadres in the legal field and the human rights areas.

And we need to continue brainstorming on these issues and discussing with the Palestinian leadership, with regard to the needs, including on issues such as water and other issues of that nature, which might not appear to be political in nature, so maybe less attractive in the eyes of some, but I think that these are very important issues. And if you want to be a serious state—and we are a serious state—we need to cover all the bases and to expand the knowledge of our cadres in all fields, including in fields related to the substantial agenda of the United Nations, as we move forward from now until the year 2030.

So I just want to say that for those of us who participated in the Amman experience, it was really very rewarding and thrilling, to see those young Palestinian cadres eager to learn and eager, really, to shoulder the responsibility in building our responsible state, the State of Palestine. Thank you.

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: Thank you very much, Riyad. We should move now to the next item on our agenda, international conference on the question of Jerusalem to be held 3 and 4th May, 2016 in Dakar, Senegal. You have the Working Paper Number 2 in your folders. The provisional program of the event as agreed to at the Bureau meeting on 10 March is contained in Working Paper Number 2, which has been distributed by the Secretariat. The objective of the conference is to provide up-to-date information on current situation in East Jerusalem under occupation; identify opportunities to intensify international support for resilience, protection, and development in the city; explore possible solutions and scenarios for a just and lasting settlement of the question of Jerusalem; and provide a venue for an open exchange among policymakers, experts, practitioners, activists, and academics.

Invited to the conference will be internally renown experts, representative of United Nations members and observers, representative of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, representative of civil society, as well as the media.

Are there any comments on the conference? Yes, Senegal, you have the floor.

Senegal: Merci beaucoup, madame la présidente. … crux of my speech, I would like to greet you all. It's the first time that we are greeting his Excellency, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the Ambassador of Indonesia. I would like to also thank the Representative of Palestine for his statement and especially welcome his initiative to pay tribute to Senegal in the various chairs of the committee's successive chairs at the head of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

As you’ve just said, the Dakar meeting is being prepared very actively and all of the services in my country are working to ensure that the meeting is a successful one. My government is very seriously getting down to this task. I would like to say on this report that the mission of the Secretariat witnessed this on the ground because it was recently in Dakar, and there was an exchange there with the main services of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs inter alia and others, who are entrusted with the task of preparing the meeting.

Senegal is currently working on providing the scientific contents for the meeting to go in depth in that area, but also we are looking at other aspects having to do with protocol, security, and other logistical aspects. We also are working to ensure that this is not just a meeting between the authorities and leaders of our governments. We also understand that there's a need to involve the civil society and this is a very important aspect for us, and my government is also working very hard on that. So these are the few words that I wanted to say by way of ensuring you all here and say that the meeting is being prepared and perhaps I could already state at this stage that no effort will be spared as we try to ensure that this meeting is a success and on par with the commitment expressed by various countries, in particular Senegal, who have been entrusted with your trust, including when we were the head of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Thank you very much, and I'm looking forward to seeing you all in Dakar.

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: Thank you very much to the Representative of Senegal. I'm sure I speak in the name of the whole of the Committee when we say that we know it's going to be a success, and we really appreciate the commitment Senegal has shown through all the years on the question of Palestine. Thank you very much, Senegal. Are there any comments?

Namibia, Wilfried.

ambassador Wilfried Emvula of namibia: Thank you, Chair, and allow me to welcome our colleagues from Indonesia and Mauritania for joining in and also as members of the Committee, of course. We look forward to working with them.

Secondly, I don't know whether the details of the program is going to be presented, but I just wanted to ask some question about the program on the 4th, but also on the 3rd, the presentations by experts. Of course, when it comes to experts, especially from the Palestinian areas, we always sometimes have run into problems of refusal in terms of travels. Could we be enlightened in terms of the arrangements as to whether we have confirmed experts that are going to do the various briefings, both on the 3rd on the life in East Jerusalem and the occupation, and the 4th on the international support for resilience, protection, and development, where there is this item on African action in support to the Palestinian people in terms of which are the experts that we expect to do presentation on those items?

Thank you.

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: Thank you, Ambassador of Namibia. I will give the floor to Elio to answer that specific.

Elio: Thank you very much. Normally, when we approve the program at the level of the Bureau meeting, we present also a list of potential speakers, which is more of a pool. We are in the process of inviting the experts; we mention experts, this is a generic term. They're expert practitioners, different representatives of civil society. We have not included on this document those who have confirmed and those who are not confirmed because we’re at different stages of invitation. Some people have confirmed, some are in the process of responding, some we have sent invitations but we have not heard from them, and that's why we don't want to burden the document with these details. We will provide you an update at the Bureau next week with more details on the participants we'll have confirmed, but we are open to suggestions for the item that you specifically mentioned on the African action in support of Palestinian. We have some in the pool of experts; I don't have the names, not here with me now, but we are open to suggestions. Please send them to us if you have.

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: Ambassador of Palestine.

Ambassador Riyad Mansour: Thank you. Again, we want to express our gratitude to the government and people of Senegal for hosting this very important conference. I know from, I think, the advanced team and from our embassy in Dakar that the government of Senegal at the highest level is extremely involved in this conference and its success, including very high level officials in Senegal. We appreciate that.

And of course, when I mention that there would be recognition for all Chairs since the inception, and by the way, we are almost celebrating 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Committee. It was established in 1975. We are not very far away from 2015, which is still the 40th anniversary. So in addition to recognizing all those who served as Chair, there will be a special recognition also to the government of Senegal from our president to the President of Senegal and to the Foreign Minister of Senegal. So—but that—I did not mention that, but I think it would be appropriate for me to mention it.

Now, with regard also to the issue raised by my friend, the Ambassador of Namibia, I—we—in our discussion with the Division, we felt that we should have Plan A, Plan B, Plan C, just to make sure that if the Israeli occupying authorities obstruct the participation of experts, particularly from Jerusalem and on Jerusalem from Palestinians, that we have backup individuals and experts that if the first one that—for whatever reason, they don't allow them to leave or they don't give them permit to exit to resort to Plan B and Plan C, if need to, in order to make sure that we have sufficient representation of Palestinian experts in this conference.

With regard to African participation, I think that it will be great if we have, of course, which I am sure that we will from Senegal, but also from other African countries to show this support to the cause of justice for the Palestinian people, it would be extremely, not only appropriate, but needed. I am sure that some of you are following the statements by Prime Minister Netanyahu. He is saying that the Israelis are going back to Africa, and they think that the Africa is now opening its doors for them. I believe that he is going to visit Kenya for the reasons that he mentioned, that things happened 40 years ago. We are going to Dakar to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Committee to demonstrate solidarity with the Palestinian people. So by all means, we need ideas, names, and those from Africa that can participate with us and to show solidarity.

Our Ambassador in Tanzania told me that they wanted to show the film of Chairman Arafat when he gave his famous speech in the General Assembly, and I was told that Mr. Salim—remember Mr. Salim who was president of the General Assembly because he was dancing in the General Assembly during that speech –—he wanted to see himself. So perhaps, maybe we can invite him to come and to show his solidarity to this meeting. Just only one name that comes to mind, but everybody, from Egypt, from other Arab countries in Africa, from South Africa, from Namibia, of course from Senegal, from other African countries. We would like to see as many as possible of experts in this field so that from Senegal, there will be an appropriate answers to the Prime Minister of Israel that Africa is not opening its doors for him and for the Israeli occupation, that Africa is still holding the position that this occupation has to end and the independence of the State of Palestine should be the order of the day, and there will be no normalization with Israel until these objectives are accomplished.

Thank you.

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: Thank you, Ambassador Mansour. The Division and the Committee have invited experts from Senegal to participate, and we are open to suggestions, like Ambassador Mansour said, for sending us names of African experts, which we think it's very important, their participation, reinforcing particularly what Riyad has said and answering to Israel on the issue of Africa.

Are there any other comments? If there are no more comments, may I take it that the Committee wishes to approve the provisional program for the conference contained in Working Paper Number 2?

It is so decided.

Our next agenda item is Activities of the Working Group. I'm pleased to inform you that the Committee's Working Group is organizing with support of the Division the screening of the film *Giraffada*. The film showing will be held today, 7th April, at 6:30 p.m. in the Trusteeship Council. I understand that we have a long, long list of participants; even longer than the seats available in the Trusteeship

Council.

Unknown Speaker: Overbooked.

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: Overbooked. We are overbooked.

Unknown Speaker: [indiscernible]

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: This UN and—#Unknown Speaker

[indiscernible]

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: This UN and New York premier of the award-winning French-German-Italian-Palestinian production will feature a question-and-answer with the director, Rani Massalha, moderated by correspondent and producer for VICE on HBO and Emmy-nominated journalist, Ahmed Shihab-Eldin. It is open to all UN members and observers as well as interested civil society organizations and secretariat staff. Over 600 people have already registered online.

Unknown Speaker: Eight hundred.

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: Eight hundred now. Eight hundred people have registered online. I think we have 600 seats, so hurry. We hope you will proceed right after the—we finish the Committee meeting. The first two rows are reserved for Committee members. You can all use those seats.

I would now like to give the floor to Ms. Natasha Meli Daudey, who has really done an incredible job; Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta for a briefing on the activities of the Working Group. You have the floor, madam.

Natasha Meli Daudey, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALTA, CHAIR OF WORKING GROUP OF THE COMMITTEE: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, for those kind words, and thank you, Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates, for inviting us for this little briefing.

So on the 3rd of March the Working Group convened a brainstorming session, which was attended by 21 delegations. Participants agreed that previous briefings by NGOs to the Working Group had been very useful but that there was a need to reach out to a broader audience.

It was suggested that high-profile NGOs such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Reporters Without Borders should be approached for future briefings that would be from now on open to the UN membership. Participants also underlined the importance that briefings are timed and linked to major UN milestones and events. Organization of events in the margins of main UN commissions was mentioned and highly encouraged. The occasion of submission of important related UN reports should also be used for the organization of briefings on the situation on the ground.

Other ideas floated included the need for the Working Group to reach out to Israeli NGOs and to support people-to-people contacts between Israelis and Palestinians, the need to engage with Palestinian youth; the need to outreach to U.S. universities, schools, as well as support by Palestinian civil society so that it can participate in the work of UN bodies.

The need to diversify activities was also mentioned. There was support for organization of cultural events such as film screenings, like the one we are hosting this evening, art exhibitions, concerts, and literary evenings for instance, because obviously the ideas can be more varied.

The importance and added value of reaching out to the media was underlined. Working Group members suggested that the media could be invited to certain and targeted briefings. Members also underlined the importance of a strategic media outreach and the establishment of direct contact with specific journalists. It was agreed, nonetheless, that this particular role could not be taken up by the Working Group itself, as it would be more befitting for this particular role to be taken up at the level of Permanent Representatives.

The Working Group does suggested that this point is brought to the attention of the Committee for its consideration and the members of the Working Group will be interested to listen to your views on this particular point.

I would like now to brief you on the first activity that we have organized in this context, which was a panel discussion on the role of women in the search for Israeli-Palestinian peace, which was held in the margins of the Commission on the Status of Women on the 14th of March. The discussion was attended by a number of diplomats from the Committee including your good self, Madam Chair, and other diplomats, one of members of the Committee, and an impressive number of representatives from civil society, which we could count around a hundred that came.

And a number of them were unfortunately kept outside of the room by the security or asked to leave the room because the room couldn't take more people. So in fact we are seeing that there is a lot of interest to this kind of activities that we are organizing.

Ms. Sarah Taylor from Human Rights Watch, who moderated the discussion, referred to research proving that women's engagement is key to the success of any peace process. Ms. Hiba Husseini, Legal Advisor to the Palestinian Negotiations Team, referred to the participation of women in technical roles in the negotiations, but unfortunately not yet in the decision making.

Civil society organization in Palestine had mobilized for the implementation of Resolution 1325 but a national action plan had yet to be implemented. Ms. Lihi Joffe of the Israeli Coalition of Women for Peace, underlined that the Israeli peace camp was shrinking and activists were reluctant to demonstrate as initiatives to silence criticism were gaining momentum. The event successfully achieved its goal of exposing a broader range of civil society organizations working on gender to the issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It also helped to open the lines of communication between various sectors of civil society.

The Working Group intends to build on the success of this meeting by holding similar events on the sidelines of future sessions, such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Persons with Disabilities, et cetera. Throughout the year we intend to invite prominent civil society organizations to brief the UN membership on other topical issues. We will continue to implement other relevant ideas emanating from the brainstorming, which will be considered into a strategy paper for the Committee's endorsement. And we obviously welcome any valid ideas from your end on how best to capitalize on this outreach.

Finally, as Madam Chair announced, there will be the screening this evening. We welcome you there. We hope that you will join the great numbers that have already confirmed, and we obviously count on your support and ideas to further this outreach and to build on the momentum that we were very encouraged with with the very first activity that we organized in March.

Thank you very much.

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: Thank you very much, Ms. Daudey, for the useful informative briefing and for your work, which really—it has helped the Palestinian cause.

Are there any comments? No comments.

Ambassador Riyad Mansour: [indiscernible]

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: You?

Ambassador Riyad Mansour: I'm just waiting if someone else wants to speak. Not?

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: Okay, Ambassador Riyad.

Ambassador Riyad Mansour: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that since we decided to go back to this Working Group under the outstanding leadership of our colleague from Malta, it is proving that this is really very productive and useful group in getting involved in additional activities and bringing ideas, very creative ideas for showing the different aspects of the life of the Palestinian people and their struggles, including through cinema, the film that we will see, and through, you know, the activities on issues related to woman and so on and so forth. So I must congratulate the Working Group for this outstanding work under the able leadership of our colleague from Malta.

In this connection I believe that there are other ideas, which I am sure that some of you, maybe all of you are familiar with. There is another outstanding film that maybe you should in collaboration with the DPI Palestine Unit, there is another fabulous film. I saw it. I don't know, maybe many of you have. The name of it is *The Wanted 18*, which is really a remarkable, hilarious movie during the time of the First Intifada, in which the Israeli occupying authority would utilize 1,000 soldiers and intelligence going after 18 cows in Beit Sahour town.

When that city decided, you know, not to buy anything from the Israeli occupying authority, but they needed to have milk and milk product for their children, so they bought 18 cows. And then the Israeli occupying authorities thought that chasing these cows and they were hiding them from one place to another place. But it shows in a very humorous and humanistic way of the struggle of that town against the Israeli occupation, and 1,000 soldiers to look ridiculous looking for these 18 cows to arrest them. So I think that this movie would be fabulous, you know, to be shown here.

Another idea also in collaboration with the DPI unit in Palestine, there is a very creative and highly scholarly individual, Suad Amiry, who wrote a very funny book about well, Golda Meir slept with my mother or with my mother-in-law. And she is going in many cities giving, you know, that book speech. I think it would be great to invite her, the Committee with the DPI so that she can give us her performance of, you know, talking the book to us. She is a brilliant woman and she lives in New York now for a while and she's accessible, and I think that we should contact her and invite her, you know, for an event in New York in one of the rooms to show this different aspect of the narrative of the Palestinian people.

And last but not least is also that we talked a lot with the DPI Palestine Unit about bringing Palestinian-American comedians to tell in a very hilarious way—some of you invited—you went to Carnegie Hall, in which they performed for the first time there, and all those who have seen them, they fell in love with them. They make fun of the life of Palestinian-Americans, their parents, and what have you, but in a very human-faced kind of stories.

So these are some of the ideas that I think that we can retaliate to some of the crazy stuff of trying to say that certain stories belong only to a group of people in our national homeland, and the DPI department objected to some of these pictures, and their stories in Haaretz that the DPI reversed its position, I don't know, in one or two panels, and caved in under the Israeli pressure. Let's, you know, retaliate by telling, showing the humanistic contribution of the Palestinian people in their own normal way of telling all these tragic stories in a very funny way, such as the movie, as I said about The Wanted *18*.

These are some of the ideas that I put available to you. I'm here, I'm referring to you, my friend, the Chair of the Working Group from Malta, that to take them into consideration as you move forward with the two individuals sitting behind you, Madam Chair, from the DPI Palestine Unit. We need to move in these areas because these are wonderful things that we should bring to the international community.

Thank you.

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: Thank you, Ambassador Mansour. And I'm sure that your initiatives and your proposals with the help of our friend Natasha from Malta and the two individuals that he said sitting behind me will become a reality, and will help the work of the Committee. Are there any other comments in relation to the Working Group? If there are not any other comments, we can move on to the, to our last agenda item, which is other matters.

Under our last item I would like to inform you about a few upcoming Committee matters of which you should be aware. On 14, 15th April the 13th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference will be held in Istanbul, Turkey, and Ambassador Seck has accepted the invitation from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to represent the Committee at the conference.

The summit convenes every three years and aims at jointly reviewing the international situation in the political, economic, and social fields, and analyzing the impact on the global Islamic community. The preceding Islamic Summit Conference was held 6,7 February, 2013 in Cairo. Over the past two years, the Committee has developed close relationships with the OIC, including the annual co-sponsored Conference on the Question of Jerusalem.

Lastly, on 18th April, Ambassador Seck will deliver in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee a statement to Security Council at the next quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. I appeal to all the members of the Committee to participate in the debate and to show our solidarity with the people of Palestine.

Are there any questions or additional items under other matters that you would like to discuss?

Unknown Speaker: Ambassador of Indonesia.

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: Ambassador of Indonesia. I'm sorry.

Indonesia: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not going to raise a substantive issue. I'm DPR of Indonesia. I just wanted to confer the apology of my new PR, Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani was not able to join us in our meetings today because of other engagement but externally I will confer the warm welcome you have extended to him in Europe, especially one that was expressed by Ambassador Wilfried Emvula of Namibia. Ambassador Djani will be joining us in our next meeting to reaffirm my government's as well as his personal commitment in the work of the Committee and to working with all of the members of the Committee.

Thank you.

Ambassador María Rubiales de Chamorro: Thank you very much, Ambassador of Indonesia.

Are there any other questions? If there are no more questions I now close this 376th Meeting of the Committee.

We will see you at the showing of *Giraffada*.