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**Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 382nd meeting**

CHAIR: Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we will, with your indulgence now begin this afternoon’s meeting. I call to order the 382nd session meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The provisional agenda for today’s meeting has been distributed by the Secretariat. If there are no objections, may I consider that the agenda is adopted?

The agenda is adopted.

Before we proceed with the agenda, allow me on behalf of the Committee to welcome warmly, first of all, His Excellency Mr. Nicholas Emiliou, His Excellency Mr. Shahrul Ikram bin Yaakob, and his Excellency, Mr. Bande, respectively, the representatives of Cyprus, Malaysia, and Nigeria. They have recently taken up their posts here in New York.

Dear colleagues, I welcome you to this house and wish you every success as you discharge your noble mandates. I have no doubt whatsoever that your work will continue along the same lines as that of your predecessors. They have contributed in a substantive fashion to the Committee’s discharge of its mandate, and I have no doubt that you will do the same.

I’m now going to recently take stock of recent developments since our last meeting, which, as you are aware , was held here on 16th of February last. On the 22nd of February, the Division for Palestinian Rights organized and information briefing session for the staff of the members and observers of the Committee on 17th of March at the margins of the Commission on the Status of Women. The committee invited Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, renowned legislator and Palestinian leader, for an exchange of views on the latest developments in Palestine. The video of this briefing is available on UNISPAL, the website maintained by the division.

On the 22nd of March, on the margins of a meeting with the Secretary-General, the Bureau of the Committee reiterated the importance that it attaches to seeing the publication of a written and substantive report on the part of the Secretary-General regarding the implementation of Security Council resolutions, in particular, Resolution 2334 of 2016. The Secretary-General reaffirmed his full support for the Committee as it discharges its mandate and reaffirmed his full support for the Division for Palestinian Rights. He expressed the fact that he was ready and willing to provide steps of assistance to the Committee, and in particular to the capacity-building program for the staff of the State of Palestine. As you know, this program is implemented by the Committee itself.

He also reiterated that he was attached and committed to the two-state solution. He viewed it as the only viable solution.

Finally, the Secretary-General reaffirmed the illegal nature of Israeli settlements from the point of view of international law, and this has been mainly demonstrated by the International Court of Justice.

On the 24th of March, the Security Council held its monthly briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestine question. On this occasion, the Special Coordinator of the United Nations for the Middle East Peace Process and the personal representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mladenov, took stock of the implementation of Resolution 2334 of 2016 of the Security Council.

On the 10th of April, the Bureau of the Committee held a meeting. They adopted the draft program for the UN Forum, which is to mark 50 years of Israeli occupation. This Forum is scheduled to be held on the 29th and 30th of June at the headquarters of the United Nations here in New York. The program of the Forum is annexed to the folders, or found in the folders before you.

On April the 18th, the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine and the Committee jointly organized a showing of the film Ghost Hunting to mark the Palestinian Prisoners Day.

On the 20th of April, the Security Council held its quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestine question. Ambassador Neville Gertze, Vice Chair of the Committee and Permanent Representative of Namibia, delivered a statement on behalf of the Committee.

We shall now move to our first agenda item, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and developments in the political process. To do just that, I now give the floor to Her Excellence, Ms. Feda Abdelhady Nasser, Deputy Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine. Excellency, you have the floor.

PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I thank the Committee’s members for the efforts exerted in the recent period, as you’ve just presented in your report on the Committee’s activities. We are grateful for the constant and principled support extended to the Palestinian people by the Committee.

Mr. Chair, we meet in these days that the Palestinian people are solemnly commemorating the 69th anniversary of the Nakba of 1948, an injustice that our people continue to suffer the consequences of to this very day, as their rights continue to be denied and a just solution remains elusive.

As we are all aware, this tragedy continues to gravely affect an entire nation of people, an entire region with far-reaching global impact, but it most painfully continues to be borne by the millions of Palestine refugees.

In spite of decades of UN resolutions and calls for respective Palestinian rights, including by this Committee, we continue to be confronted with Israel’s intransigence, which has undermined every peace effort to date as it entrenches its illegal 50-year occupation, colonizing our land, and persists with its violation of our people’s rights.

Mr. Chair, against this backdrop and despite recent political developments such as the visit earlier this month of President Abbas to Washington, D.C., the situation in occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, regrettably continues to deteriorate and contentions continue to rise.

As we meet here today, over 1,000 Palestinians who are being held captive in Israeli prisons are now unbelievably ending their thirtieth day of hunger strike. Tomorrow, this strike continues after more than four weeks. This hunger strike, known in Palestine as the Freedom and Dignity strike, is the largest such strike to date, and was launched by the prisoners to protest Israel’s violation of their human rights and denial of their human dignity. Such a strike represents among the most peaceful nonviolent actions that can be taken. It inflicts only suffering on the prisoners themselves, and their families, and on our society as a whole, as it continues to witness this injustice.

Regrettably, Israel continues to callously ignore the prisoners’ minimal demands for humane treatment, including an end to solitary confinement and other ill-treatment, as per the Fourth Geneva Convention and human rights law. Instead, it has intensified its abuse and collective punishment of the prisoners, and resorted to cynical attempts to discredit the integrity of the hunger strikers. Such actions and the hunger strikers’ worsening plight after four weeks has resulted in declining health with many in fragile condition, and heighten frustrations and tensions, particularly among prisoners’ families. As we have called for in recent communications to UN officials, we appeal for the international community’s attention to this crisis and for intervention to compel Israel’s respect of its legal obligations in its treatment of the hunger strikers, in order to avert further deterioration and any loss of life.

Today in this Committee, we appeal for solidarity with the hunger strikers along with the other 6,500 Palestinian men, women, and children being held in Israel’s prisons and detention centers, whose despair is rising. In this regard, we wish to propose today to the Committee to consider issuing a statement to express the Committee’s concern regarding the plight of the hunger strikers and the other Palestinian prisoners and detainees to convey solidarity to the Palestinian people in connection with this nonviolent, peaceful, and legitimate protest for respect of their rights, and to call on Israel, the occupying power, to respect its obligations in accordance with international law. We hope that Committee members can support such a step, and that a statement can be issued soon to convey needed solidarity at this critical moment.

Mr. Chair, at the same time we are, of course, still confronting all the other ills of this 50-year occupation. Despair continues to mount in Gaza as 2 million Palestinians remain under Israel's 10-year blockade that continues to inflict severe socioeconomic, humanitarian, and psychosocial consequences on our people, especially our youth. We call, again, for an end to the blockade and collective punishment of our people and for Israel's respect of its obligations as an occupying power under IHL, and we appeal to Committee members as well to persist with this demand in line with international law and their principled positions on the Palestine question and to offer whatever support they can to alleviate the dire situation there.

Likewise, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israel's illegal colonization of our land continues unabated. Settlement activities continue in flagrant violation of international law and UN resolutions, including Security Council Resolution 2334, which unequivocally demanded their cessation. Thousands more settlement units are being constructed by Israel, including in and around occupied East Jerusalem as it expands existing settlements and has even declared plans to construct new settlements, further damaging the contiguity and unity of our land and the viability of the two-state solution based on the 1967 lines. At the same time, demolition of Palestinian homes, wall construction, and forced displacement of our civilians continue as part of this aggressive colonization and annexation agenda, as does Israeli settler terror and incitement against our people.

Clearly, we all can all agree that such impunity would not be possible if the Security Council enforced its resolutions and held Israel accountable for its violations, including of Resolution 2334, which represents a clear international consensus based firmly on international law and must be respected just like any other Council resolution.

We will thus continue all our efforts to ensure Resolution 2334's implementation including our call for substantive written reports by the Secretary-General to aid the Security Council in upholding its responsibilities in this regard, and we appeal for the continued support and efforts by the Committee as well, towards this objective.

Mr. Chair, the last issue that I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to concerns the recent Secretary-General report on UNRWA funding. That report, which was issued in March pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 7193, was presented at an informal briefing of the Assembly yesterday. We are grateful to Committee members that were able to attend this important briefing and to express their principled support. And we urge the support of the rest of Committee’s members as this effort advances with a view to remedying the severe funding shortfalls that continue to seriously affect UNRWA's operations and its capacity to meet Palestine refugee needs, which are growing as conflicts in the regions persist and humanitarian conditions further decline.

We also wish to thank Committee members who engaged in the Steering Committee’s consultations process earlier this year, conducted by Switzerland and Turkey on behalf of the Secretary-General, to explore ways and means to sufficiently and predictably fund UNRWA for the duration of its mandate. We welcome the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report and have recently circulated to all delegations a follow-up draft resolution aimed at stabilizing and sustainably funding UNRWA to enable it to meet essential refugee needs and avert the political, humanitarian, and security risks of any interruption or suspension of services. This draft revolution was prepared in coordination and consultation with and with the support of the host countries, the agency, and the Steering Committee.

Here I believe it is necessary to clarify for delegations that the draft resolution proposes to more sufficiently fund the agency through a combination of measures and not just one, as some delegations have focused only on the call for a larger allocation of funding to UNRWA from the UN regular budget.

As clearly reflected in the draft, those measures include, inter alia, enhancing voluntary contributions, expanding the donor base, developing partnerships with the public and private sector, including international finance mechanisms, such as the World Bank and the Islamic Development Bank, and possible establishment of trust funds by organizations in addition to a larger allocation from the UN regular budget, specifically to support essential operating costs aside from international staff salaries, which are already covered. In this regard, there is no call for an increase in the UN regular budget itself, but rather for a larger share for UNRWA from the budget to ensure that this General Assembly-mandated UN agency is more sustainably and predictably supported. Any such allocation would be included as part of any revised program budget to be submitted by the Secretary-General for the organization as a whole for the 2018-2019 biennium. We hope that these clarifications are helpful and in seeking the valuable co-sponsorship and support of the Committee's delegations when action is taken on the draft in the General Assembly, and hopefully thereafter during its consideration by the Fifth Committee. Palestine’s delegation stands ready to answer any questions and provide further explanation as does the UNRWA representative office here in New York as we seek to mobilize support for this important initiative.

I wish to close, Mr. Chair, by thanking you, the Bureau, and the Committee as a whole for your efforts and constant support and solidarity to Palestine. As we quickly approach the date marking the 50th year since the onset of the Israeli occupation, your support is more needed than ever as we confront the difficult realities on the ground and continue our collective efforts to achieve a just, lasting, comprehensive, and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine. We, therefore, appeal for and look forward to the Committee members' active participation in the Forum being organized by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in late June to solemnly reflect on this occasion, and we look forward to receiving further details from the Bureau in this regard as the programs for the planned meetings are finalized.

I think you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: I thank Ambassador Abdelhady Nasser for her very informative briefing. Are there any questions? I open the floor to questions at this point. Questions and comments on the briefing by Ambassador Nasser?

If there are none, we shall move to items two and three in our agenda dealing with reports on, respectively, the Committee's international meeting in Managua with a visit to Mexico and the Committee’s meeting for capacity building for Palestinian staff in Beirut. And I would like to give the floor to his Excellency, Mr. Carmelo Iguanez, Permanent Representative of Malta, in his capacity as the Rapporteur of the Committee to present the reports.

Excellency, you have the floor.

RAPPORTEUR OF CEIRPP: Thank you, Chairman. I have the pleasure to report on these three activities. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to report on the first of these activities, the United Nations Roundtable on the Question of Palestine convened by our committee in Managua at the Foreign Ministry of Nicaragua on 4 February 2017, under the theme Building Bridges with Palestinian diaspora in Central America. It was opened by Foreign Minister, his Excellency, Denis Moncada. I would like to express our gratitude to the government of Nicaragua, to our friends, the Permanent Representative and Ambassador Maria Rubiales and Ambassador [Jaime Hermeda] and to the Palestinian Ambassador to Nicaragua, [Mohamed Amro], for the excellent support extended to the organization, to the organizers, and to our delegation which, in addition to myself, included the Ambassadors of Nicaragua, Ecuador, Indonesia, as head of the delegation, and Palestine as well as the Deputy Permanent Representative of Namibia.

This event generated great interest among potential participants from all over Central America. In fact, attendance was limited only by room capacity. The discussions were frank and interactive. Diaspora Palestinians got an opportunity to meet with their peers, and with respect—with representatives from Palestine and discuss concrete strategies to strengthen advocacy to end the occupation and promote social economic development in Palestine. The timing was favorable as the roundtable fit into a progression of diaspora events, starting with the 2016 convention in Bethlehem followed by a workshop in January in Santiago in preparation for a major diaspora conference in Chile in October. It was also a stepping-stone towards our June Civil Society Forum in New York to which all participants were invited.

Participating were diplomatic representatives of ten states, the OIC, as well as the Palestinians from Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, Chile, Cuba, and Nicaragua. We were privileged to host former Prime Minister of Belize Said Musa, who is of Palestinian origin, as a keynote speaker and the mayors of Bethlehem and Beit Jala. The diaspora adopted the Managua Declaration, which has been circulated by the Secretariat.

It emerged during the meeting that support for Palestine in Latin America varies across countries and should not be taken for granted. There were calls for the full implementation of Resolution 2334. However, many participants were still unaware of this milestone document. Concrete proposals were voiced for the establishment by the UN of an international Palestinian occupation remembrance -- Palestine Occupation Remembrance Day and of a truth-and-reconciliation commission to look into the Nakba. A diaspora Chamber of Commerce was proposed to facilitate investment in Palestine.

Our delegation had fruitful bilateral meetings with Foreign Minister Moncada, and with the Palestinian—with the Palestine Solidarity Committee chaired by Minister [Paul Alquist] and Supreme Court President [Francisco Rosada] and with the President of the Parliament Gustavo Porras and the chair of its Foreign Relations Committee, the latter proposing to pass a parliamentary declaration referencing Resolution 2334.

As you will note, these are all important ideas worthy of follow up within the context of the June events. There is also a need to generate more awareness of the work of the United Nations and of our committee among the public in Latin America. A comprehensive report will be issued by the Secretariat shortly.

Following this roundtable in Nicaragua, a delegation of the Committee carried out a one-day visit to Mexico on 7th February to promote recognition of Palestinian statehood. Colombia, Mexico, and Panama are the only Latin American countries not recognizing the State of Palestine. And also the Committee meeting served—the roundtable served to caution against a possible move of the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and also to seek support in implementing Security Council Resolution 2334. The Committee delegation included the Permanent Representatives of Nicaragua and Ecuador as well as the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

The committee delegation met with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials, including Carlos de Icaza, the Deputy Minister. The delegation also met with the chairs of the Senate Foreign Affairs committee—of the Foreign Affairs International Organizations committee, as well as with other senators. Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials admitted that recognizing Palestine was a work in progress to come at the appropriate time, while representatives from the Senate committed to resubmit a recommendation to the government to recognize the State of Palestine.

The Permanent Representatives of Nicaragua and the Permanent Observer of Palestine gave a conference at the Diplomatic Academy on the role of the Committee in preserving the two-state solution and promoting peace in the Middle East. It was attended by diplomats and a large group of university students who showed interest but limited knowledge on the question of Palestine.

Overall, the Committee delegation visit was positive. It revitalized the question of Palestine in Mexico and mobilized interest by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the two Foreign Affairs committees, and sectors of public opinion.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I will next report on the third activity, which is the United Nations capacity-building workshop on sustainable development goals for staff of the State of Palestine entitled, Partnerships for Empowering a Future State of Palestine, Sustainable Development Goal 17, and South-South and Triangular cooperation.

This was the second Committee activity in support of the efforts of the State of Palestine to implement the SDGs under occupation, and the first one focusing on South-South and Triangular cooperation as an important partnership modality for attaining the SDGs. The workshop was jointly organized by the Committee and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, ESCWA, and convened in Beirut on 27 and 28 April 2017.

On behalf of the Committee, allow me to thank ESCWA and the Government of Lebanon for their support and for hosting the event. The workshop was closed to the diplomatic community and the general public in Beirut. The Committee itself was solidly represented by the Ambassador Mansour. Through focused presentations and interactive discussions led by subject matters experts, 24 participants representing various ministries and entities of the State of Palestine, the business community, and civil society were familiarized with different aspects of SDG 17, including internal and external partnerships for implementation of Agenda 2013, South-South and Triangular cooperation, and the evolving development cooperation architecture.

Participants questioned whether there could be development in spite of the occupation, concluding that the South-South and Triangular cooperation, as well as partnership with international actors such as the UN, were only helpful if their ultimate objective was to end the occupation. And they incorporated human rights and accountability mechanisms based on international standards. They discussed priority areas and best practice to make South-South and Triangular cooperation effective, taking into account the peculiar Palestinian context and previous mistakes. It was widely acknowledged that South-South and Triangular cooperation were complementary, and that international organizations had a role to play in their promotion.

Therefore, it was important that the Committee organize follow-up capacity-building activities within the framework of South-South and Triangular cooperation, and encourage Committee members to contribute to expanding and enhancing the effectiveness of these activities through sharing of relevant experiences and expertise with the State of Palestine. Additional details about the workshops are contained in the workshop summaries created earlier by the Secretariat, to be followed by an even more detailed report to be issued shortly by ESCWA.

I thank you for your attention.

CHAIR: I thank Ambassador Iguanez for these very exhaustive presentations of his reports. Are there any questions or comments on the reports?

Nicaragua, Ambassador, Your Excellency, you have the floor.

NICARAGUA: Many thanks, Chair. Good afternoon to you all. Chair, Ambassador Carmelo, we wish to thank you for the report that you have presented, and for the words of appreciation that you conveyed to the government of my country. Our minister and to the Ambassador, the Permanent Representative, and me, we simply wish to reaffirm once again that we feel very proud indeed, and it was a great honor for Nicaragua that the Committee decided to hold this meeting in my country.

This was a historic meeting. It was the first time that the whole Central American diaspora came together; the first time they did that. And as you could sense and as you witnessed, it was an experience that was productive for all of the Palestinian diaspora, and just as it was for the members of the Committee. The Palestinian diaspora exposed before the Committee—well, it gave an outline of their historical context and gave an outline of what they’ve brought to Central American communities.

At the same time, it was a major opportunity for the Committee to gain awareness of the historical bonds which unite the people of Nicaragua and the people of Palestine. It was a display of solidarity, and indeed these bonds have stood the test of time. We were deeply satisfied with the fact that everyone was so ready and willing to participate. And it was a great delight to have you all in Nicaragua. Thanks to you, Ambassador.

CHAIR: I thank the Ambassador of Nicaragua for his statement. I recognize the Ambassador of Lebanon. Lebanon, you have the floor.

LEBANON: Thank you very much, Chair. Mr. Chairman, I will be quite brief. I would like to express our great happiness to host the workshop that we have cohosted with UNRWA under the title of Building Capacity of the Staff of the State of Palestine. We were honored to host them, and as mentioned by the Rapporteur, this workshop has gained ample photo op and attention by the Palestinians in Beirut and the Lebanese, and we renew our invitation to organize such workshops in the future. And we are ready to host them within the framework of Lebanon's continued support to build the capacity of Palestinian and accelerate recognition of a State of Palestine.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR: I thank the Representative of Lebanon for her statement. Are there any other requests for the floor? Indonesia?

INDONESIA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Perhaps my intervention remarks will cover all the agenda. I'm sorry for the length of the long remarks, but I would like to begin by expressing my deep gratitude to your Excellency, Chair, for convening this important discussion. We are also very grateful for the comprehensive --

CHAIR: Excuse me, if I heard you well, you want to cover all the—

INDONESIA: Not until the end, it's only for the Rapporteur report as well as the—

CHAIR: Okay, okay. Thank you.

INDONESIA: For two comments, yes. We are also very grateful for the comprehensive briefing provided by Ambassador Carmelo as well as Ambassador Feda on the latest developments relating to question of Palestine. For sure, firstly, I would like to confirm and reconfirm our commitment to our strong support of the two-state solution and any proposals other than that internationally agreed proposal would not only harmful but also might contravene to the promotion of lasting and just peaceful negotiation.

And the second, I would like to welcome the initiatives of the Committee and the effort to further enhance the capacity of the Palestinian people to achieve their fundamental rights of independence, as well as to have the outreach programs, especially the roundtable last February in Managua, Nicaragua, where my PR is chairing the meeting. It was a very fruitful discussion, and it's very welcoming discussion. Looking at what Ambassador of Nicaragua said, this is the first time ever for the outreach that is very comprehensive in nature as well as comprehensive in the substance.

And the capacity-building workshop on SDGs for staff of the State of Palestine, we also would like to comment on that. In Lebanon, where important means in this endeavor because without increasing building capacity of the Palestinians, perhaps our work here will not be very beneficial. That is my comment for now.

Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Indonesia. I think this capacity-building program is so important, and if I go by the composition of this Committee, members as well as observers, how many capacities are they for the Palestine? So mine will be a core all our individual state within the framework of South-South cooperation to come up with real concrete proposal. If I take Indonesia, I take, I don't know, Senegal or South Africa or India. So many capacities. So if you pull that all together, I think we can have a substantial amount of offers to help Palestinian cadres in not only for SDGs but across the board.

Thank you.

If there are no other requests for the floor, we will now move on to the next item on our agenda, which deals with the organization here in New York on 29 and 30th of June this year of a forum—a UN forum to mark 50 years of Israeli occupation. The first day of the Forum, the 29th of June, will be entitled Ending the Occupation: The Path to Independence, Justice, and Peace for Palestine. This will be a political discussion.

The second day is entitled Ending the Occupation: Creating the Space for Human Rights Development and a Just Peace. And this will be an exchange with civil society. The provisional programs of these two events, as approved by the Bureau of the Committee, are contained in Working Paper Number One, which has been distributed by the Secretariat and can be found in your folder.

So the first day of the Forum will highlight the need to end the Israeli occupation of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, which enters into its 50th year in June 2017 but also provide a platform for discussion of ideas and concrete steps for ending the occupation and paving the way for the exercise, the real exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination and independent and the just resolution of all aspects of the Palestine question. And together with the Bureau, I would like to encourage all members and observers of the committee to actively participate in this important meeting.

The 30th of June will be focused on mobilizing international support for—from civil society for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It will provide a platform for strategic coordination and interaction among Israeli, Palestinian, and—including diaspora Palestinian, and other civil-society organizations worldwide, and it will provide space for these organizations to contribute through advocacy to policies aimed at promoting a just resolution of the question of Palestine on the international—on the basis of international law and relevant to UN resolutions. As you know, the committee places a particular importance on engagement with civil society and I would, therefore, like to encourage all members and observers to take part in these discussions.

Are there any comments or questions regarding this forum to be held in June? I see none. May I take it that the Committee wishes to approve the provisional program for the UN Forum?

It is so decided.

The next item on the agenda is the international conference on the question of Jerusalem to be held on 20 and 21 July, 2017, in Baku, Azerbaijan. And this is reflected in Working Paper Number Two in your folders. The provisional program of the event has been distributed by the Secretariat.

The international conference on the question of Jerusalem will be organized jointly with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and will aim at informing about the realities of life for the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation in East Jerusalem. It will also explore the question of the city in the context of the two-state solution, as well as current developments in the international environment. The conference will also aim to present innovative ideas and proposals about how the international community, and especially OIC Member States, can provide concrete support to the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem amongst other areas, with a focus on economic dimensions of sustainable development and, in particular, the tourism sector.

Are there any comments on this question—on this conference on Jerusalem to be held in Baku? I see none. May I take it that the Committee wishes to adopt the provisional agenda of the conference?

It is so decided.

The next agenda item is Committee position on the quarterly reports by the Secretary-General on implementation of Security Council Resolution 2334. As you know, the Bureau of the Committee during its last meeting on 15th of May decided to reiterate the Committee's position regarding the quarterly reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2334, and a copy of this position has been distributed by the Secretariat.

Are there any comments regarding this agenda item? I see no request for the floor.

This position of the Committee will, therefore, be conveyed to the Secretary-General.

We shall now proceed to the next item on the agenda, updates from Member States on their activities related to the question of Palestine. And here the floor is open to anyone who would like to update the committee's members and observers on recent activities, initiatives, or meetings undertaken by members and observers in recent months. And I would also like to remind members and observers that on 1st of March, they’re invited to submit information on activities they planned to organize to mark the 50th year of Israeli occupation. This was transmitted in a letter.

I see that perhaps members and observers have perhaps not done much in this area. If there are no requests for the floor, we will move on to the next item, other matters. Are there any members or observers that wish to take the floor under other matters?

Palestine, you have the floor, please.

PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Maybe I give the floor first to Bangladesh before you, if you don't mind.

PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE: Absolutely.

CHAIR: Bangladesh, you have the floor.

BANGLADESH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Although it is under the other matters, I will just go back to the item that have so far been discussed. So, first of all, like to thank the Chair for convening this meeting, which is very important and also the Rapporteur of the Committee for the useful updates.

We reiterate our unrelenting support for the state of Palestine, and the cause of the people of Palestine, and also the two-state solution.

On the issue of the outreach activities, we support—we join the other delegates about the importance of this outreach activities and at the same time we would arch for more recognition. And for the—we also like to reiterate the importance of capacity-building for implementation of the SDGs, particularly for the Palestinian people. All the countries are striving for implementation of the SDGs.

We are lining up for [VNR]. But at the same time, we should remind ourselves that our Palestinian brothers, for them also, the SDG implementation is very important and the slogan that no one is left behind, that should be more applicable for the people of Palestine. So I just thought that we should keep this in our mind.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, Bangladesh. I was afraid that maybe, before I give you the floor, a last call for this Committee's mobilization for sustainable funding of UNRWA. Yesterday meeting was very, very important and very revealing. There again, if this Committee and the membership of this Committee only really gets mobilized, I think both in terms of voluntary contribution and in advocating for more regular UN budget contribution to be devoted to that fund, will make the difference. The situation of UNRWA is very, very dire.

Ambassador Feda, you have the floor.

PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And of course, I fully agree with your remarks and with the appeal that you’ve made to Committee members. And in that sense, while we do rely on the Committee members for their support and solidarity, we also do so in terms of practicable action—action that can make a difference here at the UN, and that can translate that support and solidarity in meaningful ways, including with regard to the Palestine refugees. And as you noted, the funding situation of UNRWA is severe. They have $115 million deficit. There are 5.3 million Palestine refugees in the Middle East that are dependent on UNRWA’s education, health care, and other relief services. And everyone has agreed that they provide not only this crucial humanitarian and development assistance, but stability in—a modicum of stability in the areas of operation in the region. So I would reinforce your call for Committee members to support this effort.

Mr. Chair, I also wanted to reiterate how strongly Palestine feels about the capacity-building programs that the Committee, along with the Division for Palestinian Rights, has been developing in recent years, and to thank those Member States that have hosted capacity-building programs and expressed their support for that, including today by Indonesia and Bangladesh and others. And to say that that is also a practicable action that makes a difference for Palestinian cadre in our ministries, in our institutions to learn from your country’s best practices, and also to be able to access training programs within the UN system, whether by ESCWA or any other organization.

And so in addition to expressing our appreciation for that, we would like to urge the continuation and the expansion of the capacity-building program, and also to reinforce the appeal that you made in the context of South-South cooperation for those members of the Committee that can extend support, and to reaffirm our gratitude in that context.

And lastly, just to also express our appreciation to Lebanon for its facilitating the arrangements of the ESCWA training, and also our appreciation to Nicaragua for hosting the meeting earlier this year in Nicaragua, and particularly for the proposals in terms of outreach to our diaspora, which I think was a very successful initiative, and as [Ambassador Jaime] indicated, created a lot of interest and a lot of—mobilized their energies with a lot more potential. And I wish to also encourage the Committee that where meetings of the Committee are being held, where there is a community—a Palestinian community—to engage the diaspora as we would any other civil society group, to mobilize their support. And they are looking for ways—concrete, practical ways—to support, and that perhaps the Committee can help in terms of mobilizing and coordinating their support.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIR: I thank Ambassador Feda for her comments. There being no other questions on the agenda … Oh, I recognize the League of Arab States.

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES: Thank you, Chair. I wish to thank the Committee for its work and the interest that it attaches to the rightful Palestinian cause. As regards any other business, I wish to share with you the activities that Member States have been asked to conduct as have delegations as members of this Committee.

Of course, in the previous period, namely in April, we saw a hunger strike which lasted more than a month. It lasted until the 24th of April. The Secretary-General of the Arab League sent a message to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on that date. That message also went to the International Committee of the Red Cross and sought to exert pressure on Israel and bring it to—prompt it to comply with international law and with the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

The General Assembly also organized on the 4th of May an extraordinary meeting during which very important decisions were taken. These included the decision that an inquiry would be conducted into the condition of Palestinian prisoners and to call to—to call upon Israel to treat them properly as prisoners and to call upon the international community to protect these prisoners. The League of Arab States also organized a sit-in during which the League reaffirmed the Secretariat support to the Palestinian prisoners. A team was deployed to visit the prisoners and to gather first-hand accounts from the prisoners and their parents and families. The Secretariat created an operations room in which they established daily reports regarding the status and conditions in which these prisoners are held. You will find all relevant information in these initiatives on the website of the League of Arab States.

Thank you.

CHAIR: I wish to thank the Representative of the League of Arab States for that important statement and for giving us that information. If you could send to the Committee the presentation that you’ve just made, that would be of great help to us. It will allow us to circulate it to members and observers of our committee.

With those last statements, I adjourn the meeting, thanking everyone including the Secretariat.

The meeting is adjourned.