



**His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly**

Remarks on the occasion of the

**Special meeting of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the
Palestinian People**

**On the International Day of Solidarity with the
Palestinian People**

New York, 29 November 2011

His Excellency Mr. Abdou Salam Diallo, Chairman of
the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People,

Her Excellency Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy
Secretary-General of the United Nations,

His Excellency Mr. José Filipe Moraes Cabral,
President of the Security Council,

His Excellency Mr. Riyad Mansour, Permanent
Observer of Palestine to the United Nations,

Ambassadors,

Distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to
thank the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its
dedicated work and for inviting me to speak here
today.

We meet today to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

We come together to renew our commitment to finding a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and to achieving comprehensive peace in the Middle East. We are also here to reaffirm our shared responsibility in this regard.

The issue of Palestine has been particularly central during this session of the General Assembly. A number of significant events have already taken place since September.

We witnessed an historic development here in New York when the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, transmitted Palestine's application for Membership to the United Nations to the Secretary-General on the 23rd of September.

The issue has since been considered by the Security Council.

On my part, and within the framework of my mandate, I circulated this request to all the Members States of the United Nations.

A little more than a month ago, on the 18th of October, an exchange of prisoners was praised by the whole international community.

I expressed my thanks to the States, as well as to all other parties, who have worked tirelessly over many years to facilitate these releases.

This *positive development* showed the importance of *mediation* and *negotiation* in the peaceful settlement of disputes, a subject that I have identified as one of the key focus areas during the 66th Session of the General Assembly.

On its side, the Quartet, of which the United Nations is an eminent member, has *accelerated* its efforts to allow for a re-launch of the negotiations.

We all hope that these efforts will be *fruitful* and will lead to a *peaceful settlement* of the question of Palestine as soon as possible.

Israel and the PLO must step up their efforts to engage each other in honest negotiations and overcome the deadlock.

Everything should also be done to alleviate the daily suffering of the Palestinian people.

The situation on the ground is a source of great concern.

Israeli construction of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has continued, especially in and around East Jerusalem and in Area C of the West Bank.

Properties continue to be demolished, land continues to be confiscated and Palestinians continue to be evicted from their homes, in violation of international law and in defiance of international efforts to revive negotiations between the two sides.

In this context, I would like to pay tribute to the United Nations system, and in particular to the United Nations Relief and Works agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). I would also like to acknowledge non-governmental organizations and civil society at large.

All of these actors have played a *pivotal role* in alleviating the suffering of the growing Palestinian refugee population. They have done so under extreme political and financial conditions and I thank them for their ceaseless dedication.

I would like to underline that for the current biennium year in 2011, the UNRWA mission on the ground is challenged by the recurrent global financial crisis. I would urge all Member States to solidify their valuable contributions to the work of UNRWA.

Distinguished delegates,

Alongside all these important developments in the *Middle East peace process*, it is my conviction that the General Assembly has a role to play.

We should continue to work collectively for the attainment of a *just and comprehensive negotiated peace settlement* in the Middle East. A peace that results in two viable, sovereign and independent

States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized, pre-1967 borders.

I will not spare any effort to participate in solving a conflict which for far too long has besieged the region and its peoples.

Thank you.