

Statement by
His Excellency Mr. Abdou Salam Diallo
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People
Agenda item 37: Question of Palestine
Sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly
29 November 2011

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I would like to thank all delegations that attended this morning's special meeting in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

At that meeting, we undertook a comprehensive overview of the key elements of the events and facts that have affected the troubled Israeli-Palestinian relationship and have had a negative impact on the peace process.

Before I turn to the customary introduction of the four draft resolutions on the question of Palestine, permit me to run through just a few of those elements.

Throughout the year, our Committee has constantly supported the resumption of meaningful permanent status negotiations with clear objectives and a specific time frame.

It is deplorable that the Quartet's efforts in this regard are constantly undermined by the large-scale pursuit of the Israeli settlement campaign, under the impotent, evasive and embarrassed gaze of the international community.

The resumption of negotiations therefore remains essentially contingent upon a permanent freeze in settlement-building in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the dismantling of outposts.

Like the rest of the international community, our Committee welcomed the implementation, on 18 October this year, of the first stage of the prisoner exchange between Israel and Hamas. However, it is urgent that all political prisoners illegally held by Israel should be released and reintegrated into society.

Unfortunately, the peace dividend that the exchange was rightly expected to generate did not materialize, owing to rocket fire from Gaza and disproportionate retaliation by Israel.

The Committee, which deplores the killing and injury of innocent civilians, calls on all parties to respect the truce brokered by Egypt, with a view to securing a lasting ceasefire and the complete lifting of the Gaza blockade.

Furthermore, our Committee encourages the United Nations, like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to give favourable consideration to the application for admission to membership submitted by Palestine.

In that connection, we regret the confiscation by Israel of tax revenues belonging to the Palestinian Authority, thereby worsening an already precarious fiscal situation. At this difficult time, our Committee requests donors to maintain and, if necessary, increase their financial support for Palestine in order to sustain its State-building efforts.

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I will now introduce to the Assembly the four draft resolutions adopted by the Committee and circulated under this agenda item: **A/66/L.15, A/66/L.16, A/66/L.17 and A/66/L.18.**

Before going any further, I would like to inform you that Sierra Leone for L.15 and Belarus for L.15, L.16, L.17 and L.18

have joined the list of sponsors.

The first three draft resolutions relate to the work of the **Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, and the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information.**

They reaffirm the important mandates entrusted to these entities by the General Assembly. As in the past, the Committee intends to ensure that the resources made available to them are used effectively.

The fourth draft resolution, entitled "**Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine**" reaffirms the position of the General Assembly with regard to the essential elements of such a settlement and outlines the main developments in the past year, including the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations.

In essence, the four draft resolutions set out positions, mandates and programmes of particular importance.

While the resolutions on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the special information programme of the Department of Public Information traditionally enjoy wide support from delegations, there is room for improvement with regard to the vote on the draft resolutions relating to the work of the Committee and the Division.

I would like to say to the group of States that believe our deliberations are unbalanced that those deliberations reflect the asymmetrical nature of the conflict and the disproportionate balance of power between its protagonists.

Our Committee has always been a staunch supporter of the two-State solution and intends to continue to play a constructive role in support of the international community's efforts to bring about a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine.

For that reason, we believe it is important for you to support the Committee, which is the only body established by the General Assembly to focus exclusively on realizing that goal.

In pursuing objectives common to us all, the Committee counts on the sincere cooperation of all Member States.

In conclusion, I call on the General Assembly to vote in favour of these four draft resolutions.

I thank you.

* * *