



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

828 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 • TEL. (212) 953-9130 • FAX (212) 697-1970

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STATEMENT

BY

AMBASSADOR SIMEON A. ADEKANYE
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON

AGENDA ITEMS 15 & 14:

- (a) QUESTION OF PALESTINE
- (b) THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

AT

THE 60TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 30 2005

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Delegation of Nigeria, I wish to express our appreciation of the Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and to commend its bureau under the Chairmanship of Senegal for the efforts exerted in fulfilling its mandate. Undoubtedly the exertions of the Committee have helped put much-needed searchlight on the plight of the Palestinian People, whose rehabilitation through a viable Palestinian State is at the center of the Middle East crisis. In Nigeria's view, unless the Question of Palestine is confronted in all its ramifications, well-considered efforts of the International Community would be set at naught.

A just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question requires of both sides to the conflict a genuine commitment to foreswear violence in the pursuit of their objectives. This is the only way to create a conducive atmosphere for confidence and trust. It also demands of both sides the courage to rein in those elements who are afraid of the future because of experiences of the past. The ghost of the past can only be exorcised when the seeds of hope for the future are planted. Nigeria believes that the time to plant such seeds is now. We therefore, salute both Israeli Government and the Palestinian National Authority for their efforts in that regard.

A commitment to peaceful dialogue and respect for agreements reached therefrom will be consistent with the principle of an independent Palestine State existing side by side with the State of Israel, within secure borders. This also would be consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), among other. Nigeria, therefore, calls for an urgent resumption of negotiations within the framework of the Quartet in order to seize the momentum provided by recent positive developments in the region.

Mr. President,

Nigeria welcomes the recent pullout of the Israeli forces and settlements from the Gaza and commends the Rafah Border agreement to facilitate the movement of the Palestinian people. As President Olusegun Obasanjo, current Chairman of the African Union, declared in his message on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People yesterday, **“ the recent removal of Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip and the parts of the Northern Bank, including the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip, and the opening of the Rafah border crossing by the President of the Palestinian Authority are helpful signs for peace. These specific steps should serve to galvanize action of the parties, in particular, and the international community, in general, towards a definitive solution that would bring peace to the region as a whole.”** The leaders at the Sharm el Sheikh summit of February 2005 have reaffirmed their vision and commitment and created a momentum which we should not allow to wane or fail.

On the Syrian Golan Heights, Nigeria calls on the parties to adopt flexibility and to resume peace negotiations under the principle of land for peace, which, in our view, will guarantee the much needed peace and security in the region. We consider the resolutions 56/31, 56/32, 57/111 and 57/128 on Jerusalem and Syrian Golan, as well as Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981), among others, as providing the valuable framework for such peace. Their implementation would help to address the security concerns which have inhibited a solution. Such a course of action would enhance the attainment of a just and comprehensive peace and create a climate of trust for the much needed development in the region. We trust that the international community will continue to be engaged with both sides in the search for peace.

Nigeria wishes, in this regard, to express appreciation to James D. Wolfensohn, the Quartet's Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement for his tenacity and commitment, and to Alvaro de Soto, the new UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Palestinian Authority and his team for their hard work. Their efforts deserve the fulsome support of the International Community in general and the parties to the conflict in particular.

Finally, it is equally appropriate, Mr. President, to commend the valiant efforts of the officials of the United Nations system and the international community, in particular the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, who in the past years invested their time and energies in the cause of peace and security in the region. Their example and commitment should elicit commensurate response from the international community to turn the Middle East into a region where all peoples can live in peace and harmony.

I thank you.