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La situation au Moyen-Orient

Déclaration

de

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auprès des Nations Unies**

Check against delivery

60th General Assembly

Item 14

The situation in the Middle East

Statement

by

**H.E. Mr. Peter Maurer
Permanent Representative of Switzerland
to the United Nations**

New York, le 30 novembre 2005

Unofficial translation

Mr. President,

Certain major developments in the year just ending make it possible to look to the future with prudent optimism. Quite apart from its political significance, the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and from northern parts of the West Bank, has demonstrated to some extent the ability of the government of Israel and of the Palestinian Authority to work together. The agreement with Egypt on border controls, and the agreement reached two weeks ago on Rafah and other points of passage are to be welcomed.

Mr. President,

Quite apart from the evacuation of civil and military infrastructures in the Gaza Strip and northern parts of the West Bank, the success of the disengagement will be measured on the basis of two crucial factors:

The first of these is stabilisation of the Gaza Strip, which involves challenges of an exceptional nature at the level of human security. Public services are no longer able to keep up with the increased demands of a population that continues to grow. Unemployment and poverty rates are particularly high. And the needs in terms of humanitarian aid remain considerable. It is the duty of the international community to do its utmost to improve the situation in the Gaza Strip at the political, security and humanitarian levels, notably by guaranteeing the access of goods and persons. We particularly appreciate the efforts of the Quartet and the personal commitment of its Special Envoy James Wolfensohn in this regard.

The second crucial factor is the re-launch of a genuine political process. The efforts of the international community to stimulate economic and social recovery in the Occupied Palestinian Territory will only be effective and lasting if they are supported by a political process of equal importance. The only way to bring about a solution to the conflict is through negotiation. The two-fold objective is on the one hand the establishment of Israel's right to live in peace in secure, internationally recognised borders, and on the other the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the establishment of a viable Palestinian state. Solutions need to be found on a number of issues including borders, the question of Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees. Success will require meaningful concessions on both sides.

For a peace proposal to have a chance of succeeding it must have significant popular support. Civil society must therefore be made a part of the process and public opinion must be prepared for peace. If they are to embark on this path, the populations concerned must feel that there are real and tangible prospects for an improvement in their present situation. Negotiations will only bear fruit in an atmosphere of hope and confidence, with no further violence or arbitrary actions, and with a clear political outlook.

Mr. President,

While awaiting the resumption of political dialogue, the two parties must respect and implement their respective obligations and commitments. To begin with, they must respect international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and human rights. These constitute the applicable legal framework. Equally important is the obligation to avoid taking measures likely to prejudice the results of the negotiations on the final status.

The obligations of the two parties have long been known. Their fulfilment is the only reasonable and essential option, to restore confidence and make the emergence of a constructive dialogue possible. We call upon the international community and in particular on the Quartet to commit to implementation of the Road Map and to monitoring its application by both sides.

Priority must be given to respect for and maintenance of the territorial unity between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Switzerland calls on the Israeli government to freeze all settlement activities, which are a major concern. It is with disquiet that we observe such developments as the territorial division of the West Bank by the construction of the barrier, the continued expansion of the settlements, and the increasing isolation of East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. The development on the ground of irreversible *faits accomplis* seriously undermines any chance of arriving at a lasting peace through negotiation, and can only lead to a deepening of the humanitarian crisis and aggravation of the political, economic and social fragmentation of the Palestinian population.

Switzerland equally calls on the Palestinian Authority to apply itself with greater determination to the dismantling of terrorist infrastructures. The Palestinian Authority must furthermore take steps to assure the security of all its citizens. Respect for human rights and application of the principles of good governance should also be among its priorities.

Mr. President,

The alternative to peace is more violence and destruction. 2006 will be a major year for elections in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. One cannot but hope for the emergence of a new trend and the resumption of a political process that will lead to achievement of the objective which has been adopted by the whole international community: two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

I thank you for your attention.