

Canada

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**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR JOHN MCNEE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**TO THE 62ND SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE**

NEW YORK, 30 NOVEMBER 2007

**DÉCLARATION DE
L'AMBASSADEUR JOHN MCNEE
REPRÉSENTANT PERMANENT DU CANADA AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES**

**À LA 62^E SESSION DE L'ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE
SUR LA QUESTION DE LA PALESTINE**

NEW YORK, LE 30 NOVEMBRE 2007

Mr. President,

Canada is strongly committed to a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. Canada maintains its longstanding support for a two state solution; one which recognizes Israel's right to live within secure borders and includes the establishment of a democratic, independent and viable Palestinian state.

This week in Annapolis, the Israelis and Palestinians agreed in a joint understanding to work toward a peace agreement by the end of 2008. This historic development came about through the determination, vision and efforts of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, and under the leadership of the United States.

The progress achieved during this conference brings renewed hope. We were especially encouraged by the robust presence and support of the international community, notably from the Arab world, whose renewed commitment is vital for a comprehensive peace agreement. We urge Arab states to continue to support these efforts, including through the Arab Peace Initiative and by constructively engaging in the peace process.

Canada fully supports the process launched at Annapolis and we are prepared to do all we can to help the parties. We also welcome the international community's commitment to helping the Palestinians. For our part, Canada will be working with the Palestinians on a program of assistance to address areas of governance, security and prosperity.

Canada also supports initiatives towards creating the necessary conditions for peace. We believe that the Israeli decision to freeze the expansion of settlements is key in this regard.

This said, the primary precursor to any form of lasting peace has to be the cessation of all forms of violence. These include an end to the campaign of rocket attacks and the return of Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit to his family in Israel. Similarly, while we recognize Israel's security concerns and its right to defend itself, its actions must be measured. Israel must exercise the utmost restraint and meet its obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law. All parties have a responsibility to avoid civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure.

Mr. President,

Canada urges the United Nations and its member States to play a more constructive role in supporting peace. While recognizing the indispensable role of UN agencies in delivering humanitarian and development assistance to the region, Canada strongly believes that UN resolutions should complement these efforts. Canada remains concerned by the disproportionate focus placed in this Assembly on the situation in the Middle East, in particular by the number of resolutions that single out Israel. These

resolutions should contribute constructively towards the goal of a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

With a renewed optimism in the region, Canada believes that the international community, including all UN bodies, must focus efforts at this critical moment to help the parties achieve sustainable peace.

Thank you.