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Mr. Colville said on 2 April 2014, the State of Palestine deposited with the Secretary-General its instruments of accession to a number of international treaties. These included seven of the nine core human rights treaties plus one of the substantive protocols, as follows: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Five of these treaties were set to enter into force today (namely CAT, CERD, CEDAW, CRPD and CRC); the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child would enter into force on 7 May; and the two Covenants would come into force on 2 July. As of these dates, the State of Palestine would be formally bound by these treaties under international law. This accession to seven core human rights treaties and a key protocol, without any reservations whatsoever, was a significant step towards enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights in Palestine. He believed, but was checking this, that Palestine would be the only country in the whole of the Middle East and North Africa not to make a single reservation on any of the treaties it had ratified. The High Commissioner for Human Rights commended the commitment of the State of Palestine to be bound by the international human rights standards contained in these treaties and to engage with the associated human rights treaty bodies which monitored their implementation. OHCHR stood ready to assist the State of Palestine, at its request, to support implementation of its treaty obligations. There was more on that in the briefing notes.

Asked how this would change the situation for Palestinians, especially in the occupied territories, Mr. Colville said Palestine was now bound by the provisions of five treaties, and by July 2, the two International Covenants which covered many, many issues. Palestine, like other States, would now be carefully scrutinized on how they implemented those treaties. This gave a lot of extra ammunition to civil society organizations, the media, the United Nations and many others, to help Palestine ensure the human rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories, in the West Bank and Gaza, were upheld. Obviously there would be practical difficulties. This was a lot of treaties to ratify in one go. But in the end this was really a cause for celebration, and for a State to ratify so many treaties in one go was really commendable.