



**DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS**

**UNITED NATIONS ASIAN AND PACIFIC MEETING
IN SUPPORT OF ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE**

*International efforts at addressing the obstacles to the two-State solution:
the role of Asian and Pacific governmental and non-governmental actors*

Bangkok, 10 and 11 July 2012

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Executive summary	3
I. Introduction	4
II. Opening session	5
III. Plenary sessions	11
A. Plenary I	11
B. Plenary II	16
C. Plenary III	22
IV. Closing session	26

Annexes

I. Summary of the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	29
II. List of participants	33

Executive summary

The United Nations Asian and Pacific Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, examined the consequences of the illegal construction of Israeli settlements and the wall on the Palestinian land; their impact on the rights of the Palestinians and on the prospects for the fulfilment of the two-State solution; and ways in which the international community, particularly the Asian and Pacific countries, civil society and parliamentarians, can contribute to the lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. Representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and the media, together with expert speakers, many from the Asian and Pacific region, shared their expertise at the Meeting.

The Meeting was addressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority, Riad Malki, who noted that the recent inscription of the Church of Nativity in the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was a historic development, as it was the first time the international community had recognized the sovereign rights of Palestinians over their land. At the same time, he warned that the economy of the Palestinian Authority was very fragile and donor-reliant, and the two-State solution, long hoped for, was “increasingly at risk”. He urged the international community to start thinking about sanctions against Israel to achieve its compliance with international law. Countries should stop importing settlements products and prosecute violent settlers. The Palestinians would welcome international monitoring teams, in particular in East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank. As for the Palestinians, if negotiations with Israel did not resume in due time, the Palestinian delegation would ask the General Assembly to raise its status to that of an observer State.

Focusing on the illegal construction of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land and the reality on the ground, some panellists pointed to the need for all countries to respect the rule of law and utilize legal mechanisms, such as the International Court of Justice, to resolve their disputes. The Meeting then reviewed the expansion of Israeli settlements since the signing of the Oslo accords to the present day, as well as the construction and the adverse consequences of the wall in the West Bank. According to some panellists, the goal of the settlement project had been to make any kind of solution with partition impossible. The speakers pointed to the reality on the ground that saw the exponential increase of settlers from 180,000 in 1993 to the current 500,000 to 600,000, supported by an entire maze of restrictions on Palestinian lives that led to near-complete Israeli physical control of the West Bank. They furthermore noted that the purpose of the settlements was to solidify Israeli control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory and ensure that Israel would retain possession of vast and strategically important tracts of Palestinian land under any future diplomatic arrangement. Alongside the settlements, panellists discussed the impact of the wall on human rights and limitations to civic, personal, religious and economic life. Moreover, other, more hidden aspects, such as the permit regime and a dual legal system – civilian law for Israelis and Israeli military law for Palestinians – were limiting Palestinians’ access to their land and to fair treatment. Discussing the situation in East Jerusalem, speakers highlighted the Israeli policies of displacement and isolation and the intended objective to “de-Palestinize” it through house demolitions, the revocation of permits and gerrymandering.

Despite the well-known illegality of all such practices and activities, the Meeting felt that Israeli society was ignoring the issue; a system of brainwashing, combined with comfortable living, allowed the Government of Israel to continue its policies unchallenged. While 60 per cent of Israelis supported the two-State solution, only a tiny minority supported a freeze in settlement construction. Looking at the situation also from a historic perspective, several panellists recalled that the two-State solution had been de facto hindered by powerful nations since the adoption of the General Assembly “Partition Resolution” in 1947 and succeeding Israeli Governments felt they received a green light from the international community, despite its renewed toothless condemnations. Strong support of the United States of America for Israel, including diplomatic and military, was also identified as a main obstacle to changing the status quo. Experts in international law reiterated that Israeli Government activities were in clear violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention).

In spite of the grim realities on the ground, the participants thought that there were nevertheless several things that could be done to steer the situation towards a solution. Optimism was expressed regarding the reversibility of the settlement project, as many of the settlers would be willing to be relocated inside Israel in return for generous compensation by the Government. Speakers also noted that, while settlements were the main obstacle to peace, an agreement on borders would bring a solution.

The Meeting identified different areas and levels at which action could be taken. It called for a stronger role by Asian countries, such as China and Japan, as well as the region as a whole, through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). At the governmental level, the countries of the Asia-Pacific region that had not yet done so should recognize the State of Palestine and establish full diplomatic relations. The Meeting also stressed the importance of the role of civil society as a global force that could keep the Palestinian cause at the centre of attention and could mobilize public opinion to give fresh impetus to the stalled peace process.

I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Asian and Pacific Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace was held on 10 and 11 July 2012 at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 66/14 and 66/15 of 30 November 2011. The theme of the Meeting was “International efforts at addressing the obstacles to the two-State solution: the role of Asian and Pacific governmental and non-governmental actors”.

2. The Committee was represented at the Meeting by a delegation composed of Abdou Salam Diallo (Senegal), Chair of the Committee; Desra Percaya (Indonesia); Saleumxay Kommasith (Lao People’s Democratic Republic); Husni Zai Yaacob, Deputy Secretary-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Malaysia); and Riyad Mansour (Palestine).

3. The Meeting consisted of an opening session, three plenary sessions and a closing session. The themes of the plenary sessions were: “Illegal construction of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land: the reality on the ground”; “Settlement building as the main obstacle to the two-State solution”; “Support by Asia and the Pacific for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine”.

4. At the Meeting, presentations were made by 15 speakers, including Palestinian, Israeli and Asian speakers. Representatives of 25 Governments, Palestine, 1 intergovernmental organization, 5 United Nations system entities, 11 civil society organizations and 3 media outlets attended the Meeting.

5. The summary of the Chair of the Committee on the outcomes of the Meeting (see annex I to the present report) was published shortly after the Meeting concluded and is accessible on the website of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat at www.un.org/depts/dpa/qpal/calendar.htm.

II. Opening session

6. **United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon** sent a message to the Meeting, which was read out during the opening session. The Secretary-General noted that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process had been for some time at a dangerous standstill and that recent actions on the ground had not contributed to a conducive environment for dialogue, citing Israel’s continuing settlement activity contrary to international law and its commitments under the Road Map. Moreover, he said, settlements and their infrastructure, as well as the separation wall, which deviates from the Green Line, in contravention of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, severely restricted the movement of Palestinians and hampered the development of their economy. Since the beginning of the year, 370 Palestinian structures had been demolished in the West Bank and some 600 people, including women, children and elderly, had been displaced.

7. The situation in Gaza also remained unstable, as the devastating closure entered its sixth year, he said, noting that more than 80 per cent of families depended on humanitarian aid. Lifting those restrictions within the framework of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) would help rebuild self-reliance and sustainability of the Gazan economy, he added, calling on Israel to take measures towards that goal. He condemned the firing of rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel and called on Israel to show maximum restraint. He expressed his disappointment that voter registration in Gaza had been suspended, as he was convinced that progress on reconciliation remained fundamental to peace and that a unified Palestinian polity was central to realizing a two-State solution.

8. In conclusion, the Secretary-General warned that the long-hoped-for two-State solution was increasingly at risk, moving the situation further away from the shared objective of a comprehensive peace in the region. He called on the international community, including the countries of Asia and the Pacific, to act collectively to help steer the situation towards a historic peace agreement.

9. **Pichet Wangtepanukhor**, Adviser to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand, addressing the Meeting as representative of the Royal Thai Government, said that Thailand fully supported the peaceful resolution of the conflict. He stated that the Meeting was an opportunity to hear how the Asian and Pacific countries could contribute to Israeli-Palestinian peace. The impact of the conflict was felt both within and beyond the region, and it had created divisions within the international community on how best to achieve a lasting peaceful solution. The road to peace in the Middle East had been both difficult and costly. Nonetheless, doing nothing or maintaining the status quo was unacceptable, and the hostilities must stop. There was a moral obligation to end all forms of violence and a shared responsibility to help the concerned parties achieve a peaceful resolution. All outstanding issues surrounding the conflict, including the settlement issue, the economic blockade and the separation wall, must be resolved through effective dialogue and negotiations.

10. Mr. Wangtepanukhor said it was incumbent on the parties to seriously and constructively engage in direct talks with renewed energy, positive gestures and a commitment to peace. He said the Governments, intergovernmental organizations and civil society shared the responsibility to help the parties resolve all the outstanding issues through negotiations that had to be based on the principle of a two-State solution, as defined by the Road Map, relevant United Nations resolutions, and the Arab Peace Initiative. Thailand commended the work of the Committee and the constructive engagement by a number of countries that have encouraged Israel and Palestine to resume their stalled talks and find ways to break the deadlock on a number of relevant issues.

11. He stressed that Thailand fully supported the peaceful resolution of the conflict, contributing annually to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and offering job training and skills enhancement to Palestinians and populations from other States in the region. Although countries might differ politically in the context of this conflict, Thailand urged all, especially in the Asia and Pacific region, to cooperate on humanitarian and development issues, and renew their efforts to alleviate the plight of the Palestinians. Civil society had an important role to monitor the situation on the ground and provide assistance to the Palestinians. Indeed, they helped to fill the gap left by Governments and international organizations in the peace process.

12. **Abdou Salam Diallo**, Chair of the Committee, said that Israeli settlements have compromised the peace process from the beginning, noting that the settler population had exploded to half a million people today from a handful in 1967. A vast military-security apparatus and a 700 kilometre separation wall protecting the settlements kept Palestinians out of 40 per cent of the West Bank. Clearly, he noted, declarations and actions of the current Government of Israel pointed to a continuation of these unlawful policies. Unfortunately, the Chair continued, the international community had achieved very little so far to modify the approach of the Israeli Government. While the two-State solution still had a chance, the situation needed to change, he noted, but even the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, had recently warned the Security Council about a “one-State reality”. The Chair pointed out that condemnations without action elicited “barely a yawn” by Israeli officials, as confirmed by the remarks of the Israeli Housing Minister: “They need to condemn, we need to build”.

13. He urged the countries of the Asian and Pacific region to play a bigger political role in the situation to match their growing economic clout. Governments, intergovernmental organizations and civil society had much to contribute towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict based on the two-State solution. He called on the Governments of the Asian and Pacific region that had not done so to recognize the State of Palestine.

14. The Chair stated that the Security Council should also be encouraged to travel to the region to witness the situation on the ground, and that the fact-finding mission of the Human Rights Council on settlements should be dispatched without further delay. He concluded by saying that peace would not hold until Gaza and the West Bank were reunited, and progress on that track needed the support of all.

15. **Riad Malki**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority and the representative of Palestine, delivered the keynote presentation of the Meeting. He opened his remarks by discussing the deliberations concluded the previous week of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage Committee concerning the inclusion of the Church of Nativity as an endangered site on the World Heritage List. To his disappointment, that had been met by immediate opposition by certain countries, which showed that some States had taken a “total negative and automatic” position to anything related to the Palestinians. But, in the end, the Committee had voted in favour. That was a historic moment, as it was the first time the international community had recognized the rights of Palestinians to their territory.

16. He informed next on the meeting of the previous week of the Palestinian Cabinet, which had discussed the payment of June salaries to some 170,000 Palestinian civil servants. The Government could not pay their salaries because the economy was strangled by so many restrictions imposed by the Israeli military occupation, he said. That had made it impossible to develop their own economy sufficiently to provide not only services to its people, but also their salaries. The siege on the Palestinians had a financial aspect, and countries that had promised financial support had not delivered. As a result, it had been possible to pay only some salaries for the previous month, and it was unclear what would happen at the end of the current month.

17. He also discussed the construction of the separation wall in “total defiance” of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice rendered on 9 July 2004. That Opinion had determined that the wall was illegal under international law and that Israel must dismantle it and make reparations for the damage it caused. The Court had also expressed that the wall could amount to a “de facto annexation” of land, which violated the legal and national rights of the Palestinians, including the right to self-determination. Once complete, the length of the wall would be double that of the Green Line, and more than 80 per cent would have been constructed inside the occupied West Bank.

18. Then Mr. Malki drew the attention of the Meeting to the conclusions of a special committee of the Government of Israel chaired by retired Justice Edmund Levy, which the previous week had stated that Israeli activities in the West Bank did not represent an occupation and the construction of settlements was legal. The recommendations of that committee were not binding, but were welcomed by the “right-wing” Government. Everyone was trying to build on

its conclusions, namely, that the legal system in the West Bank should be amended to allow Israelis to settle anywhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

19. The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was getting worse, he said, citing “price-tag” campaigns, and the continued siege on Gaza. Mr. Malki urged the international community to take a stand on the illegality of settlements by sending monitoring teams to the Occupied Palestinian Territory to monitor violence perpetrated by the Israeli Defence Forces and settlers’ violence against Palestinians, as well as by stopping importing settlement products. He said Israel must not “pass untouched” when it violated international law and toothless condemnations were not enough. He suggested that the international community start thinking about sanctions against Israel to achieve its compliance with international law. On this point, Mr. Malki called on the international community to take a decision against Israel’s practice of barring all United Nations investigating bodies from entering into the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Likewise, he stressed the need for monitoring the Israeli legal system on its adherence to international and humanitarian law. Moreover, he feared that Israel was moving away from a democratic society, as its laws discriminated against the Palestinians and its Arab minority. A sad reminder was the practice of administrative detention, which was the basis for the imprisonment of over 5,000 Palestinians held in Israeli detention facilities.

20. Unfortunately, he said, the prospects for peace were “not great”. He wondered if 20 years after Madrid and 10 years since the Arab Peace Initiative the parties were any closer to a solution. “We have to stop lying to ourselves that there are negotiations, because there are no negotiations,” he said. The Government of Israel wanted to maintain the status quo to manage the conflict for years and years. The prospects for a two-State solution were “getting narrower” every day. Anybody betting on change in the position of the Government of Israel should think again, he said. If negotiations with Israel did not resume in due time, and in order to protect the two-State solution, the Palestinian delegation would go the United Nations again to ask the General Assembly to grant Palestine the status of observer State, he announced. In closing, he said that they would continue building their institutions and laws and working at reconciliation within the Palestinian family, while developing partnerships with the private sector and civil society, in the hope that more States would recognize Palestine and the Security Council would grant it full membership in the United Nations.

21. The representative of **Egypt** said that his country was a partner in the peace process and believed the resolution of the conflict would lead to economic prosperity. Egypt supported an independent Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and considered that the Israeli military occupation and settlements were illegal and constituted a major obstacle to peace. Speaking on behalf of the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries, he referred to the declaration from a ministerial meeting on 4 May, which expressed grave concern about the critical human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the ongoing impasse in the peace process. The text stressed that the current dangerous impasse was the result of Israeli impunity and intransigency, which continued to obstruct a peaceful solution. The movement was convinced that the realization of Palestinian self-determination and statehood would advance peace. It was also gravely concerned about the situation of thousands of Palestinian prisoners, including at least 300 children and women and elected officials, and

condemned the unlawful conditions in which they were being held in both the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel.

22. The representative of **Malaysia** said the Palestinian cause must not be forgotten when the world's attention was skewed towards other regional developments. It was crucial to raise public awareness of the Palestinian struggle and work closely with domestic and international parties, beyond racial, religious and political bounds, to ensure that their struggle was finally rewarded. Advocacy and awareness programmes organized by the Palestinian Rights Committee were great examples of mainstreaming the plight of the Palestinians. Tragically, Israel continued to commit crimes of indiscriminate violence and collective punishment with impunity. Malaysia was gravely concerned at the continued destruction and devastation of the Palestinian territory by the occupying forces. In that context, it was important for Governments, non-governmental organizations and individuals from Asian and Pacific States to continue to help reduce the pain and suffering of the Palestinians. Malaysia had consistently supported the cause, including through its assistance to UNRWA. It believed the two-State solution was viable, and it accepted Palestine as a legitimate State and urged all countries at the Meeting to accept it as the 194th Member State of the United Nations.

23. The representative of **Namibia** said little progress had been made in several decades, but the Palestinian people had never given up their identity and attachment to their homeland or lost sight of their struggle. The Meeting was taking place at a time of anger, war and wanton destruction in the Middle East. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the world witnessed harassment and indiscriminate killing, with illegal settlements and the construction of the separation wall seriously threatening the viability of a future State of Palestine. For too long, the Palestinians had suffered at the hands of the Government of Israel. For years, its practices had been characterized by systematic human rights abuses, punctuated by, among others, extrajudicial killings. Everyone was entitled to self-determination and had the right to return to the motherland. Detention, the deprivation of basic health services, the separation of families and the lack of appropriate education must be addressed immediately by the international community, especially the Quartet members. As long as the Palestinian people were deprived of their fundamental rights and freedom, and as long as their land was illegally occupied by Israel, peace in the Middle East would remain "only a pipe dream".

24. The representative of **Morocco** said the Arab-Israeli conflict was the essence of the problems in the Middle East. On that basis, Morocco called on the international community to work tirelessly to enable the Palestinians to achieve their legitimate ambitions. The two-State solution was realistic and could be implemented. Similarly, no one doubted the will and determination of the Palestinians for peace, coexistence and coordination. Thus, it was the duty of Israel to show good will and take into account the aspirations and rights of the other party. Israel could not pretend that it was showing its will to negotiate a two-State solution while taking unilateral actions, which made the solution more difficult, if not impossible. Israel, especially since the cessation of direct negotiations, had continued to annex by force more Palestinian land, in flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law. The Arab world was experiencing fundamental changes, with a clear message that should motivate a lasting solution guaranteeing the right of the Palestinian people to an independent State. He stressed the responsibility of the Quartet for starting effective negotiations, and called on the international

community to ensure Israel's compliance with its decisions, and on non-governmental organizations and civil society to play their important role.

25. The representative of **Bangladesh** said a durable and sustainable solution to the conflict must be a collective objective. Member States should pledge their commitment to that goal and throw political and economic support behind it. He was concerned about the destruction in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in and around East Jerusalem of property, homes and economic institutions, in contravention of international law. He called for maximum restraint with regard to the policy of closures and restrictions on the movement of people and goods. In order to achieve a durable solution, the prolonged and illegal occupation of Arab territories must first be addressed. The best guides for achieving the two-State solution were the Fourth Geneva Convention, relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, the land-for-peace principle, the Madrid terms of reference, the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative. He reiterated the longstanding position of Bangladesh that the continued illegal occupation was the root cause of the violence, unrest and destabilization in the region.

26. The representative of **Turkey** said that finding a just and lasting solution had always been imperative for establishing security and durable peace in the Middle East. Fundamental changes in the region had made the need for settling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict more urgent than ever. However, Israeli policies, particularly settlement expansion in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, blocked all efforts towards a permanent peace. That not only obstructed the peace process, but also the realization of the two-State solution. The international community must be firm in rejecting that illegal and unacceptable stance, and must continue to raise the matter in international forums, compelling Israel to abandon its expansionist approach. The situation of Palestinian prisoners also deserved urgent attention. More than 4,500 Palestinians were in Israeli prisons, including more than 300 administrative detainees, some of whom did not know the allegations against them. The continued imprisonment of 26 elected members of the Palestinian Legislative Council was also a significant concern. He also condemned Israeli attacks in Gaza, saying such retaliatory moves were unacceptable. A blind eye could not be turned to such tragedy, and there could be no permanent peace and stability in the region without a return to normal daily life in Gaza.

27. The representative of **China** agreed with several previous speakers that the Palestinian question was at the core of the Middle East issue. Both the Palestinians and Israelis should seek to resolve their dispute through political and diplomatic approaches leading to Palestinian independence on the basis of previously agreed principles and accords. China was deeply worried about the protracted stalemate of the peace talks as the Middle East was undergoing complex and profound changes. The international community should pay more attention to the possible negative impact of the Palestinian issue on the region and strive more rigorously to promote the peace talks. Against that backdrop, China called on Israel to lift the Gaza blockade and to take effective measures to improve living conditions and the humanitarian situation. It also urged Israel to cease arbitrary arrests of Palestinians and to release those in custody. China attached great importance to the Palestinian issue and supported their just cause to pursue their legitimate national rights, on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital. It also supported the membership of Palestine at the United Nations and in other international organizations.

28. In brief national statements, the representatives of **Pakistan** and **India** expressed unwavering support for the Palestinian struggle and the concern that unless the conflict was resolved in a just and fair manner, in accordance with Security Council resolutions, Middle East peace would remain elusive.

III. Plenary sessions

A. Plenary I

Illegal construction of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land: the reality on the ground

29. **Mahathir Mohamad**, former Prime Minister of Malaysia, focused his remarks on the rule of law. The *raison d'être* of the United Nations was to ensure that nations would respect international law to live in peace and security. Unfortunately, he said, the veto power in the Security Council had limited the action of the Organization and denied equality in response to breaches of international law. He was horrified that the very countries that had created the United Nations had no respect for it; they acted unilaterally regardless of the position of its Member States. Israel was a creature of the United Nations, and it behoved it to adhere to international law. If there was any dispute, it was up to the parties to go back to the United Nations, and once a decision was made, it must be respected. But Israel completely ignored the Organization that had created it.

30. As for Israeli settlements, he stated that they were illegal, according to international law, and tantamount to infringing on the territorial integrity of a neighbouring country. Citing territorial disputes settled by the International Court of Justice between Malaysia and Singapore and between Malaysia and Indonesia, he said the parties might have disagreed with the ruling, but they accepted it. That was the way all nations should behave, he opined. Settlements were also the major obstacle to peace, and over the past 60 years not much progress had been achieved, he noted. If settlement activity was halted, he said, he could see some hope for the solution of the conflict. It was also about time, he concluded, to recognize the existence of a Palestinian State.

31. **Gideon Levy**, a columnist for *Haaretz*, asserted that the settlements were “a huge success story” of the Zionist project. The goal had been to make any kind of solution or partition impossible. So, the settlements had succeeded and the Israeli peace camp had lost the battle, with 500,000 to 600,000 settlers. The Israeli occupation was a unique phenomenon, he said. There had been more brutal occupations in history, and some had been longer, but never had there been an occupation where the occupier felt so good and so just, and presented itself as the victim. Try telling the Israelis that the Israeli Army was not the most moral in the world. Five million Israelis believed that the settlements were the “most legal phenomenon on earth, maybe even the most moral one”.

32. He said that brainwashing, which included a campaign of dehumanizing and demonizing the Palestinians, enabled the occupation to endure without any doubts in Israel. Now, the occupation was no longer on the Israeli agenda; it was a given, and peace stopped being an issue.

Israelis believed the world was against them no matter what they did; if they were criticized, it was anti-Semitic, so they were not responsible for anything. International law, for them, was anti-Semitic, so why bother to follow it, he said. Thus, Israelis created rules of their own. That, combined with a deeply rooted belief following the Holocaust that they were the “chosen people”, created a reality whereby neither international law nor international organizations were relevant.

33. But the real litmus test, he said, were the settlements. The day Israel declared them illegal and started evacuating them was the day the world would know Israel meant peace. Until that day, which seemed very far away, “don’t believe it where one hand speaks peace and the other builds settlements”, he said. Many Israelis supported the two-State solution, but only a tiny minority supported a freeze in settlement construction. To put settlements in context, he recalled that it was the left-wing parties that had started the settlement construction and stressed that the whole Israeli society was part of it, not just those who lived there. In fact, most Israelis living in settlements did so because it was affordable housing and only the hard core, the minority, were there to “run the movement”, he added. Settlements and occupation did not bother Israelis, he said; they were more interested in the next vacation, or the next jeep. “Don’t expect much from Israeli society in the coming future. Life is quite good. Violence and terrorism are almost non-existent”, he said. It was disturbing, he noted, that all this was taking place in the “only democracy in the Middle East”, even though it was meant only for Jewish citizens and marred with lack of social justice. In closing, he said he was left speechless by the current situation and fully agreed with the statement of Minister Malki.

34. Turning to the humanitarian impact of the separation wall on the Palestinians in the West Bank, **Ray Dolphin**, Humanitarian Affairs Officer and barrier specialist in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat in Jerusalem, said that the wall, if completed, would be 700 kilometres long. To put that in perspective, he recalled that the Green Line was 320 kilometres in length. The barrier would cut off 9.4 per cent of the West Bank, and all of East Jerusalem would be on the western, or Israeli, side. The land involved was some of the most important agricultural areas and greater Jerusalem.

35. The wall was about 66 per cent complete (440 kilometres), he said, adding that construction had slowed in recent years, but the previous week, the Israeli official in charge of the wall said building would continue very soon in the Bethlehem area and, later, around Jerusalem.

36. Recalling the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, he said it had not been about the wall as such. According to the Opinion, Israel had the right, in fact, the duty, to protect its citizens, but that should be in conformity with international law. If the wall was built on the Green Line, it would be in line with international law; however, that was not the case. Because the barrier went so deeply into the West Bank, some 7,000 to 8,000 Palestinians were in a “strange limbo”, caught between the wall and the Green Line. The wall, if completed, would affect tens of thousands of farmers and eight of the West Bank governorates. The United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had so far received 26,000 claims from the Palestinians.

37. As for the link between the wall and the settlements, he said that if construction went as planned, 71 of 150 settlements in the West Bank would be encircled, and about 400,000 of the 500,000 West Bank settlers would be on the Israeli side and effectively “annexed” to Israel. In its Advisory Opinion, the International Court of Justice declared that Israel should cease construction and dismantle the wall. Two weeks later, the General Assembly, in its resolution ES-10/15, unanimously called on Israel to comply with the Opinion. All European Union member countries had supported the text, yet none had followed up on it, he said.

38. Many in Israel thought the wall had staunched the suicide bombings, but according to Israeli statistics, last year about 15,000 Palestinian workers had entered Israel illegally, which meant that the wall was not likely the reason for the decline in suicide bombs. Furthermore, the wall was increasingly separating East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, effectively redrawing the geographic realities of Jerusalem. Upwards of 80,000 East Jerusalem residents were now cut off from their own city because of the wall, and there was no sewage removal or garbage collection. Farmers were cut off from their fields and had to go through checkpoints and gates to access their lands.

39. Presently, he continued, approximately 7,500 Palestinians were caught between the Green Line and the wall, adding that if building went as planned, nearly 30,000 would be in that situation and require permits to live in their own homes. To access health centres on the Palestinian side, Palestinians had to pass through checkpoints and gates, and that was for education and family visits. Gates were opened two or three times a day and when they closed in the afternoon, farmers had had to return, making it impossible for them to irrigate their lands overnight. He concluded by saying that for the Palestinians to enjoy decent living, all barrier construction must cease.

40. Putting settlements in a historical perspective, **Diana Buttu**, Joint Fellow with the Middle East Initiative and the Harvard Law School Human Rights Programme, and former Legal Adviser with the PLO Negotiations Affairs Department, said there was more to Israel than settlements and its actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The idea behind it was the creation of a Jewish State, not a State of all its citizens. Hence, in order to become a Jewish State, the Government had to expel those who were not Jewish. That had given rise to the Palestinian refugees. That process, which had begun in 1948, was continuing with the Israeli settlements project, which was an attempt to replace one people with another. Israel was trying to get rid of as many Palestinians as possible, while retaining as much Palestinian land as possible.

41. Thus, she said, a discussion about settlements was not just a discussion about physical structures. The housing units brought people, which brought roads and schools, and then a military presence to protect the roads and the settlers. There were checkpoints to protect the military and a wall to protect the checkpoints, and so forth. The settlements, which take up approximately 2 per cent of the land of the West Bank, now control over 60 per cent of the West Bank owing to these physical structures. There were also more hidden aspects, such as the permit regime and a dual legal system – civilian law for Israelis and Israeli military law for the Palestinians.

42. The hope was that the settlements would “somehow go away, that they were a temporary measure, that they could be undone”, as was the thinking with the occupation, she said. But the reality was that unless there were international measures to reverse the occupation, it would continue for a “very, very long time”. She often heard about the window of opportunity closing on the two-State solution. At what point did one say that window had closed, she wondered. It was not just a question of undoing physical structures, but of changing the mindset of Israel. Politically, settlements had come full circle, from being illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention to being an obstacle to peace to not being a question of legality or illegality, in the case of the present United States Administration, but of “illegitimate” activity.

43. The message being sent to Israel, she said, was that it was okay to build and expand the settlements and the international community would accommodate it. In 1993, when the peace process first began, there had been 180,000 Israeli settlers. That number had more than doubled in seven years, as if the peace process had given Israel a green light to build and expand. Today, there are 600,000 settlers. In none of Israel’s proposals was there a suggestion to completely scale back the settlements. Instead, there was a push by Israel to have the Palestinians “somehow accommodate these illegal settlements”. Those were the “land swaps”, instead of the 1967 borders.

44. For Israel, she said, if it continued to build and expand, the international community would eventually sign on. “The more you build, the more you expand, the more Palestinians will have to capitulate, and there will not be peace”. All of that was illegal; what was missing was a push by the international community. “The time has now come to make this a measure of decolonization”, to completely and squarely submit that all the settlements were illegal, “each and every one”, she said.

45. **Kamal Hossain**, Jurist and former Member of the Inquiry Commission of the then United Nations Commission on Human Rights, recalled that in 1967, Judge Theodor Meron was the legal counsel to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and wrote a secret memo for Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, who was considering creating an Israeli settlement at Kfar Etzion. This was just after Israel’s victory in the Six-Day War of June 1967. The memo concluded that creating new settlements in the Occupied Territory would be a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Eshkol went ahead to create the settlement anyway, and therefore set the conditions which began the settlement enterprise of the Government of Israel.

46. Therefore, Mr. Hossain said, the settlement enterprise had the purpose of solidifying Israeli control and ensuring that under any future diplomatic arrangement, Israel would retain possession of vast and strategically important tracts of Palestinian territory. Moreover, he said, the settlements were the strategy of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, intended also to ensure that a genuinely sovereign Palestinian State never emerged in the Occupied Territory.

47. It was current practice to distort and deny the apparently unchanging character of Israeli activity, Mr. Hossain said. Having been part of a fact-finding mission, he said that unless one saw the bullets flying overhead, or the Palestinian family waiting more than an hour at a crossing, then it would be impossible to understand the reality on the ground. Israelis persisted in their self-serving strategy because they were indulged by powerful segments of the

international community, which themselves were vulnerable to internal domestic and political compulsions and lobbies.

48. They were the central part of a “very deep strategy, very well thought out, premeditated, with an underlying strategic goal”, to redraw the map, he said. Settlements were illegal under international humanitarian law, they were built on confiscated Palestinian-owned land, and they were turning the Palestinian-controlled parts of the West Bank into unconnected Bantustans whose map looked like Swiss cheese or leopard skin.

49. He pointed out that, despite the repeated calls of the international community and the illegality of the settlements, Israel continued to expand them; also, impunity for settler violence continued. As for what could be done, he said the situation was a challenge to humanity and to the 193 United Nations Member States. But one way to fight falsehood was to reaffirm the truth – as many times as the falsehood was asserted. The United Nations did that; its words should be a basis for action to stop discrimination against the Palestinians.

50. The Asian region, he said, had mobilized against colonization, discrimination and injustice, and in Africa, apartheid had finally yielded to a coherent movement. He drew inspiration from that, urging the Asian and Pacific region and beyond to mobilize support in communities and on campuses to bolster the international effort, perhaps by boycotting goods produced in the settlements. It was critical that those in that region spur support to ensure Israel’s compliance with its obligations.

51. In the ensuing discussion, the possibility of sanctions was raised, either against products from the settlements or against Israel itself. The role of the United States was also the subject of a number of questions, particularly concerning that country’s backing of Israel and its own domestic lobby. One speaker asked whether the panel felt it was the United States military and diplomatic support of Israel that was the main barrier to any change in the status quo. He said the Obama Administration had promised “a new day” in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict; now he wondered whether the Israeli-American axis remained central to the problem.

52. A panellist pointed to the Israeli-United States “axis”, agreeing that much of what went on in Israel was based on support from the United States. It had been said that Israel ruled the world by proxy and that that proxy was the United States. It was a case of the tail wagging the dog, the United States was doing the bidding of Israel. The Jewish lobby in the United States, in the media, the film industry, finance and Government, was also cited, as was what the panellist called the “reluctance” of United States Presidents to condemn Israeli actions. That backing made Israel feel it could do as it pleased.

53. Another panellist said settlements were fully integrated into Israel, and they did not have a separate economy. Sanctions on Israel as a whole, therefore, might be considered. The panellist said that even though the picture was bleak, people went out and resisted the occupation daily, and the sheer number of people at that conference was illustrative of the sense of hope.

54. The point was also made that the Palestinian issue must be made relevant to the United States, the countries of the Asia and Pacific region and of other regions. What was going on in

Israel was not affecting only the Israelis and the Palestinians; it had wider implications. For one thing, peace in the Middle East affected all.

B. Plenary II

Settlement building as the main obstacle to the two-State solution

55. Viewing the settlements issue through a legal prism, **Iain Scobbie**, Professor at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, discussed, among other things, their illegality in international law. He referred to article 49 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention), to which Israel was a party, that said, “The occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies”. When the International Court of Justice addressed the applicability of that Convention in the occupied territory and the legality of settlements, it ruled that the Convention applied to any armed conflict between the High Contracting Parties and that it was irrelevant whether a territory occupied during that conflict was under the sovereignty of one or other of the combatants. The Court found that Israel’s settlement policy was in breach of article 49 of the Convention. It was well established that the settlement of occupied territory by the nationals of the occupying Power was unlawful.

56. Referring to the commission report of Justice Edmund Levy, published in June 2012, which declared that settlements were not illegal, Mr. Scobbie noted that it would not have great resonance in international law, as the expertise of the committee was weak and the report had been refuted by Israeli lawyers and the United States State Department.

57. Asserting that the settlements breached the fundamental values of the international legal system, he detailed the United Nations response to settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which essentially began with General Assembly resolution 2443 (1968) and its reference to the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Assembly first mentioned settlements expressly in a text in 1971, noting that the Israeli authorities were not complying with that Convention. Later, by its resolution 66/225, the Assembly reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967. He noted the characterization by the Assembly of the construction of the wall as being contrary to international law and seriously depriving the Palestinian people of their natural resources.

58. As a result of the failure of the Security Council to adopt resolutions condemning the settlements, the last one was resolution 471 (1980), because of the exercise of the veto by the United States, the Assembly convened its tenth emergency special session in March 1997 to take up the matter, he recalled. Generally, the Council had been “less assiduous” than the Assembly in taking action on the settlements, but it had affirmed that the Fourth Geneva Convention was applicable to the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and determined in that same resolution 446 of 22 March 1979 that the settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 “have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East”. The United States, which had referred to the settlement activity as “illegitimate” as opposed to

“illegal”, indicated that its policy was predicated on a shared belief with Israel that the conflict should be resolved by Israelis and Palestinians alone, and that “even the best intentioned outsiders cannot solve it for them”.

59. Mr. Scobbie also discussed the role of the Human Rights Council, stating that, despite the inability of the Security Council to engage on the settlements issue, other United Nations bodies were doing so. Nevertheless, he said, the Government of Israel “continues to deny that the Fourth Geneva Convention applies as a matter of law to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, despite rulings by its own Supreme Court that, since 1967, Israel had been holding the West Bank “in belligerent occupation”. Furthermore, the Government of Israel had consistently challenged the status of the Palestinian Territory as occupied, referring to it instead as “administered” or “disputed”.

60. **Hind Khoury**, former General Delegate of Palestine to France and former Minister for Jerusalem Affairs of the Palestinian Authority, said there was an urgency to salvage the two-State solution. Some Israeli leaders realized that there were not that many alternatives to the peace process if they wanted to maintain a Jewish State. She quoted Shaul Mofaz, the new leader of the Israeli political party Kadima: “The greatest threat to the State of Israel is not nuclear Iran, but that Israel might one day cease to be a Jewish State, because Palestinians could outvote Jews. So it is in Israel’s interest that a Palestinian State be created”.

61. In that context, Ms. Khoury said, the aggressive pursuit of colonization of the West Bank and East Jerusalem by the Government of Israel was a clear message that Israel was not interested in completing the peace process, but rather in maintaining it, in order to continue to change the reality on the ground to fit its own policies. The viability of a future Palestinian State would require land and other natural resources, the presence and well-being of its people, and clear sovereign borders. It was the duty of the international community to ensure that none of those elements were forgotten or compromised in the peace process.

62. She distributed a paper that she said showed how Israel, through its colonization of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, was jeopardizing those three elements, grabbing the very land that would constitute the Palestinian State, thereby rendering the two-State solution a “non-option”. Israel had continued to usurp the land, water and other natural and economic resources, rendering the daily lives of the Palestinian people extremely difficult, economically unsustainable and devoid of their most basic human rights. Jerusalem had become a kind of “human warehouse” and Israel was trying to “de-Palestinize” it through house demolitions, revoking permits and gerrymandering. Jerusalem, she added, could be a pluralistic city only if it remained holy to the three religions. Israel was also trying to ensure full control of all borders, she said.

63. Israel wished, she continued, to establish a Palestinian State according to its own terms: truncated, non-viable and under Israel’s complete control. An analysis of the colonization programme and its infrastructure showed that Israel was willing to provide Palestinians limited autonomy on scattered parts of the Occupied Territory as a solution to what it called the “demographic threat”. That strategy aimed to force Palestinians to accept Israel’s terms,

eventually enabling it to pursue ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian population and further control the demography and land, even after any peace agreement.

64. She stressed that, absent any accountability by the international community, Israel was encouraged to pursue its colonization programme unabated, in total violation and full breach of international law. People of the Middle East, and specifically Palestinians, had paid a high price for that lack of accountability. It was high time that Israel's violations of international law be halted. Members of the international community had the task not only to salvage a sustainable solution, but also to restore credibility to the body of international law.

65. Time was not on the side of the two-State solution, she declared. Settlement expansion must cease immediately. The negotiations needed clear terms of reference to resume, and a calendar should be set to establish the Palestinian State. Achieving that was the duty of the United Nations, which had partitioned historic Palestine and had been trying to apply Security Council resolution 242 (1967) for 45 years. Palestinian leadership had made huge and painful compromises, agreeing to a reduced version of their State in order to complete the peace process, and its State-building exercise was admired worldwide. Establishing the Palestinian State in the framework of the two-State solution would save the peace in the Middle East and the credibility of the international governance system, she concluded.

66. Noting that the Ambassador of China had, the previous day, expressed the attitudes and position of the Government and people with regard to the Palestinian issue, **Li Guofu**, Senior Research Fellow at China Institute of International Studies in Beijing, said that China had been among the first countries to have fully supported the Palestinians since 1964 and, despite geopolitical changes, could still assure its Palestinian friends that the position of China would not change under any circumstances. The settlements issue was clear to all in the international community. Whenever there was any sign of hope, there was a consensus among all Chinese scholars, but they were also cautious, because in a few days that optimism could quickly turn to pessimism. He believed the issue in the long term would be resolved, but in the short term the prospects were very gloomy.

67. He said the Palestinian issue of the past 60 years could be divided into two stages, the first being a period of mutual denial and military violence between the two sides. The second period was one of negotiations. However, after more than two decades, expectations had not been met. In fact, after Oslo, Israeli society and the political forces in that society had been moving towards a more right-wing approach. After the second Intifadah, it could be said that there was no more "left" in the political wing and its strength had diminished.

68. He noted that today Israelis did not feel any urgency to resolve the problem. Israel had withdrawn from the Gaza Strip, the wall was being built and there had been almost no suicide cases last year, so Israelis did not feel they had to undertake any initiatives. All kinds of excuses were given: the timing was not suitable for an accord; Mahmoud Abbas was too weak, or there was an ongoing debate with the United States and Israeli leadership over which issue should come first – the Palestinian one or the Iranian nuclear matter. Israel had indicated to the United States that before it resolved the latter issue, it could not expect Israel to make any concessions

on the Palestinian peace process. So, the urgency of the Palestinian issue had been “greatly weakened” in the past year or two.

69. Finally, he said, there was a deeply rooted belief among moderates that it was politically unwise to push for progress because Israel would never give in to Palestinian demands,. On the other side, Palestinians would never agree to anything Israel was willing to give. Thus, the gap was widening, as new settlements were springing up daily in the West Bank. Everyone from both sides knew the issues, and one thing was clear: the need for a two-State solution. Privately, most people were convinced that that was the only way for Israel to remain a democratic State of Jewish character. However, given the settlement expansion, there was simply not enough land for the Palestinians to build their own country.

70. In conclusion, as way of recommendations, Mr. Goufu said that the United States, in order to preserve its privileged role, should pay more attention to resolving the Palestinian issue. Likewise, the international community should be reminded of its responsibility to keep the Palestinian issue at the centre of media attention on a daily basis, despite the many competing crises.

71. **Taro Kono**, Member of the House of Representatives of Japan, introduced himself as a member of the Liberal Party, currently in the opposition. He was also a member for Japan of the Network of Arab Liberals, which held meetings in various locations in the Middle East.

72. The Government of Japan, he said, believed that settlements were illegal and violated the Oslo accords. “But it would stop right there.” The “old-school” Japanese diplomats were not about to anger the Government of the United States of America, although younger parliamentarians felt Japan should step up its presence in the peace process. Japan was essentially free of religion, and it had no special relationship whatsoever with any communities in the region, so it could become an honest broker in the Middle East. It had no colonial history there, and no relationship with the Holocaust or any pogroms. It did not sell weapons to other countries, so it did not make that kind of money from the region. It did have a military agreement with the United States, so it could “talk” to the White House and agree to disagree on Middle East issues. At the same time, the Japanese economy was totally dependent on Middle East oil, so its economy depended on that stability of the region. Japan had no veto power in the Security Council, he went on to say, adding that Japan therefore should be more actively involved in the Palestinian issue. The Quartet, for example, would become a Quintet with the direct participation of Japan.

73. He also highlighted a phenomenon known as the “Japanese baby in Palestine”, which was a Japanese law that stated a baby born to Palestinian parents in Japan would be given Japanese nationality. That meant that the Government had to “secure” them, meaning that if something was happening to them in the West Bank or Gaza, Japan was automatically involved.

74. Japan was also one of the largest donors to the Palestinian Authority. It had given aid to support Palestinian water resources, construct and maintain the sewage system, and for renewable energy resources in the West Bank. He described one flagship project called the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity, which involved the construction of an agro-industrial park in

Jericho. It was working closely with the Palestinian Authority, Israel and Jordan to make that a success. He hoped the project would alleviate some so-called eastern segregation, he added.

75. Importantly, he noted, Japanese non-governmental organizations were promoting Palestinian products in Japan and the Asian market. They were trying to identify products made in the settlements. Since the Government of Japan was not introducing such a bill, the thinking was to introduce a “private members bill” to Parliament to restrict the import of products made in the settlements. Yesterday, a speaker had said that the economy of the settlements was strongly intertwined with the Israeli economy and, thus restrictions or sanctions on settlement products alone would not be effective. That might be so, but Japan should start with products made in the settlements and see how it went. Finally, he hoped that his presence at the Meeting was only a first step and that Japan would attend future meetings of the Committee.

76. **Nidal Foqaha**, Director-General of the Palestinian Peace Coalition – Geneva Initiative in Ramallah, emphasized that the settlements rendered the creation of a sovereign and viable Palestinian State impossible. When it came to Jerusalem, it highlighted the Israeli policies of displacement and isolation. The isolation by Israel of occupied East Jerusalem from the West Bank had many devastating ramifications. For example, it disconnected Palestinian families from their relatives in other cities; obstructed business transactions and undermined commercial activities; and denied Palestinians their basic right to freedom of worship by preventing Palestinian Christians and Muslims from having access to their holiest religious sites.

77. He said that in the past few years, settlement construction, including housing and infrastructure, had accelerated at an unprecedented rate throughout the West Bank, particularly in and around occupied East Jerusalem. That was part of an alarming trend, ongoing for the past three years, during which Israel, the occupying Power, had been responsible for the addition of some 50,000 new housing units in Israeli settlements across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The average Israeli family was 3.7. With that in mind, those units could house at least 150,000 new settlers.

78. Israel’s settlement regime was inconsistent with a two-State solution, he said, adding that Palestinians would not engage in negotiations without a full settlement freeze. That was not a Palestinian precondition, but an Israeli obligation in accordance with the Road Map among other things. If Israel did not consider the Road Map to be binding, then it should state so explicitly. The settlements enterprise delegitimized negotiations and the peace process. Their continuation violated the Road Map, sabotaged the Palestinian efforts to build State institutions and seriously impeded any future evacuation.

79. He said that breaking the status quo required the following: a freeze of settlement activities by the Government of Israel; an agreement on borders and security; and turning Area C, which constituted approximately 60 per cent of the Palestinian Territory, to B or A, or implementation of a comprehensive development plan for that area, which would maintain its Palestinian identity and create geographic integrity for the future Palestinian State.

80. **Gadi Baltiansky**, Director-General of the Geneva Initiative in Israel, said that the vacuum left by the absence of a solution was filled by several well-known obstacles to peace,

including a lack of courage among the leaders looking to postpone the hard decisions; pessimism; the Palestinian split between the West Bank and Gaza; the Israeli settlement policy; and, perhaps more than anything, a “deep and deepening scepticism that peace is at all possible”. That was a self-fulfilling prophecy, which discouraged any action that might bring change.

81. As for the issue of settlements, he said that was a “removable obstacle”. According to the model proposed by the Geneva Initiative, close to 130,000 settlers out of 325,000 in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, would have to be evacuated in order to create the Palestinian State. Some would do so willingly in return for a generous compensation by the Government. A small minority might oppose evacuation, perhaps even violently, but the State of Israel would be “strong enough to deal with such resistance”. However, he stated, while the problem was the settlements, the solution was the borders.

82. Yet, he said, every supporter of the two-State solution should oppose the existing trend of adding about 2,000 housing units per year in settlements. Even so, opposition to settlement construction was not enough, especially when 70 per cent of Israelis and Palestinians were convinced that the chance of peace in the next five years were “slim to non-existent”. Nevertheless, more than 60 per cent on both sides supported the two-State solution along well-known parameters: a non-militarized Palestine based on 1967 lines with mutual land swaps and East Jerusalem as the capital, and “Jewish Jerusalem” as the capital of Israel; detailed security arrangements; a fair and agreed upon solution to the refugee problem; and mutual recognition and agreement on the end of claims and conflict. Those were actually also the parameters of the Geneva Initiative.

83. Moreover, he warned, the conventional wisdom that peace was not doable in the coming years was “wrong as well as dangerous”, adding that the only way to predict the future was to shape it. Political efforts aimed at breaking the status quo was the recipe. Out of 193 United Nations Member States, close to 30 per cent were from the Asia and Pacific region. That important group could not remain indifferent. Recent developments in the Middle East showed that words could be followed by deeds. He suggested that the “old and new” Arab world reintroduced the Arab Peace Initiative and emphasized once again that peace with the Palestinians for Israel meant full normalization with the entire neighbourhood and beyond.

84. Not giving up could be demonstrated, for example, through the passage of a Security Council resolution calling for a two-State solution based on the previously mentioned parameters, he said. An agreement on borders was the only way to achieve a two-State solution, he opined. He was against an imposed solution, but thought it was a good idea to push the leaders to a place, perhaps even to a physical space, where they would have to take their decisions, possibly at an international conference. A greater involvement by new players, such as China and Japan, could help advance towards a solution. If peace in the Middle East was in the interest of the region, the continent and the world, no one could remain silent.

85. Representatives of non-governmental organizations and the media, many from the Asia and Pacific region, participated in the discussion that followed, raising such issues as the definition of the international community. That concept, said the speaker, was always used to the detriment of the Palestinians. It seemed that “the international community” referred to the

United States and those that agreed with it or were its “lap dogs”, such as the European Union. He continued by saying that an air of defeatism had descended on the Meeting, adding that major campaigns by civil society should not be underestimated. Non-violent resistance was the most effective resistance to the occupation and the only realistic path, because Israel was the fourth largest military might in the world and the eighth largest arms-dealing nation. Boycott and divestment campaigns were also a way of raising awareness of public opinion. If those countries sympathetic to the Palestinian cause joined the civil society campaign, along with all the Arab nations, several million people on the planet would be involved. Then, we would see some changes in the status quo, he concluded.

86. The issue of apartheid was also raised; as one speaker said he was shocked to hear that Israelis did not know there was something seriously wrong there. Regarding Jerusalem, one panellist noted that the idea of “internationalization” had failed in the past, so it would not be a viable solution.

87. Among the responses, panellists said there might be a thousand days of failure, but there would be one day of success. Ideologically, said one panellist, the peace camp had won as, compared to 40 years ago, now everybody talked about a two-State solution and a Palestinian State. Politically, these were the dark days in terms of the prospects for peace, but it was in the dark when one needed a flashlight. That was why the peace campaign in Israel and the voices here were so important. In the short term, they said, the situation was very bleak, owing to a lack of political will. Despite that, there were many solidarity movements around the world, and justice would prevail. Since Governments were not taking action, civil society was, in the form of a rights-based campaign. Palestinians and the Arab world as a whole had a very young population, and they were not going to give up their rights.

88. As for the international community, for too long, a super-Power had made all the decisions and stood strongly behind Israel, said a panellist, suggesting that the world, fortunately, was becoming more “multilateralist”.

C. Plenary III

Support by Asia and the Pacific for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine

89. **Walden Bello**, Member of the House of Representatives of the Philippines, said that for more than six decades, the legitimate aspiration of the Palestinian people for statehood had been thwarted by Israeli military force, backed by United States military aid and pro-Israeli diplomacy. The intransigence on the part of Israel and its main backer had been the central cause of instability and conflict in the Middle East.

90. Describing actions by Israel to obstruct the formation of a Palestinian State, he said that while the United States called loudly on Israel to halt settlement building, it did nothing to stop it. Not only did the United States fail to cut off military aid to Israel, but the Obama Administration had, in fact, increased it, by \$680 million in 2012. With a blank check for

military aid from Washington, D.C., it was no wonder the Israeli leadership paid no attention to the faint calls of the Administration to stop expanding the illegal settlements.

91. With the Netanyahu Government blocking the peace process, the Palestinian people had felt compelled to take their case for statehood to the United Nations, he said. The United States knew the peace process was “frozen” due to Israeli intransigence, but it opposed the Palestinian United Nations initiative. Due to the arm twisting of the United States, France and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland said they would abstain, thus depriving the Palestinians from obtaining 9 of the 15 votes required in the Security Council for the motion to prosper. But even if they received that number, the United States President threatened to exercise the veto.

92. He thought that it was safe to say “the Israeli tail is wagging the American dog”. President Barack Obama’s promise to get the peace process moving had not been kept, largely owing to his fear of losing the Jewish vote. The most solid Palestinian allies had always been the developing countries, most of which had themselves struggled for independence, knowing that without a State of their own, their people would remain powerless. That was why they had a special mission to assist the Palestinian people.

93. It was good news that more than 130 States now recognized Palestine as a State, he said. For those Governments in the Asia-Pacific region now extending recognition, the next step was the establishment of full diplomatic relations with the Palestinian sovereign entity representing both the West Bank and Gaza. He said that new players, such as Asian countries, could play a positive role in advancing the peace process and meetings like this one contributed to the solution by bringing together like-minded countries. Work could also begin to get the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to adopt a common position in support of the immediate establishment of a Palestinian State. Finally, he said he supported the suggestion to get Governments to support a boycott of imports from and exports to the illegal Israeli settlements. Such moves would be important steps towards mustering a critical mass of global support for a lasting settlement and the establishment of a Palestinian State.

94. **Abdelaziz Aboughosh**, Ambassador of Palestine to Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei Darussalam, said that despite the geographical distance between Palestine and South-East Asia, their relationship could be traced back to visit of Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat to Beijing in 1964. It manifested itself in various ways, including through military assistance and training courses; a decision by some countries in the Asia-Pacific region not to have diplomatic relations with Israel; the Oslo accords and the return of the Palestine Liberation Organization leadership and other members to the Palestinian Territory, which had been a turning point in the recognition of Palestine and the establishment of its embassies in various countries of the region. As examples of the relationship between Palestine and the Asian countries, he highlighted important efforts to train Palestinians cadres led by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) within the framework of Afro-Asian collaboration; JICA-Indonesia cooperation, and JICA-Malaysia cooperation.

95. Finally, Mr. Aboughosh recalled those countries in the region that recognized the Palestinian diplomatic move towards statehood: Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, India,

Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, China, Cambodia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Maldives, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Timor-Leste and Thailand. Asian countries that have not yet recognized Palestine were Japan, Republic of Korea, Myanmar and Singapore.

96. **Hasan Kleib**, Director-General for Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, said the 54 countries of the Asia-Pacific region could assist in resolving the question of Palestine, not only in addressing the obstacles, but also in removing them and translating their support for the two-State solution into recognition of Palestinian statehood.

97. He added that the settlement issue had emerged as the biggest obstacle to the two-State solution, followed by the illegal construction of the wall in the West Bank, the continued blockade of Gaza and the unjust detention of Palestinian political prisoners.

98. He urged diplomatic efforts at every turn, calling on individual countries and groups of countries to press the Security Council to undertake its Charter responsibility. Intra-Palestinian reconciliation was also crucial. Moreover, support for capacity-building was crucial for the future of the Palestinian State. For its part, Indonesia trained thousands of Palestinians in various fields, including in the economy and good governance. The region must be more responsive to the humanitarian needs of the Palestinians, including by contributing to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Bolstering the role of Asian parliamentarians and civil society was necessary and the media could also play an important part in raising regional awareness of the Palestinian cause. For example, in the Indonesian Parliament, the Caucus on Palestine was created through the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

99. Ending the occupation – or de-occupation - was a prerequisite for a peaceful solution, he said, but having served twice on the United Nations Security Council, he had reason to doubt that it would give the matter the time and energy it required. It seemed the inclination of the Council was to manage the conflict, not resolve it. Recalling its resolution 465 (1980) urging Israel to cease settlement building and to dismantle them, he said the Council had apparently forgotten about that text. He deplored that the Council did not implement its own resolutions. Based on his experience at the United Nations, in order to move towards a solution, the Secretary-General as member of the Quartet could engage more directly the rest of the membership in the peace process, while China, as a permanent member of the Security Council, could leverage it to be more assertive. Asian countries, on their part, could make use of their good relations with the United States to advocate the right solution, while at the same time the region could work more closely with countries in the Middle East. Finally, he stressed the importance of the role of the civil society and saluted the meetings of the Committee as a way to keep the Palestinian issue on the radar screen.

100. **Nick Ferriman**, Vice-Chairperson of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign Thailand in Bangkok, speaking on behalf of a small group of civil society, said that unfortunately many Palestinian supporters had come to view the United Nations as an obstacle to the resolution of the conflict, with the Security Council being the main impediment. However, he noted one had to differentiate between the top-down and bottom-up components of the United Nations, the former being the Security Council and the latter the humanitarian arms that did so much to alleviate the suffering of people all over the world. In fact, unconditional support was needed for

the Palestinians – for the 1.5 million locked in the Gazan enclave, for the 3 million confined to homes in the West Bank, and the 4 million to 5 million rotting in camps throughout the Middle East. He emphasized the unconditional support of Palestine Solidarity Campaign Thailand to the Palestinians. Putting “naked self-interest before the common good” had to change and the only force left to counter-balance powerful nations was global public opinion and civil society.

101. He believed that any institution, including the United Nations, that did not act with the consent of civil society acted illegally. The United States and the United Kingdom were deeply implicated in the occupation, providing moral and military support to Israel. What Israelis were doing to the Palestinians mirrored what the Americans had done to other indigenous peoples. It was a “toxic triad”.

102. He reviewed the history of the creation of the United Nations and the Security Council, decrying an “Anglo-American alliance” that took over the Organization. There was nothing fair, just or democratic, for example, about the United Nations partition plan of 29 November 1947, he said. The United Nations, under significant arm twisting by the Americans, had allocated 56 per cent of historic Palestine, not to the Palestinians, the indigenous people, but to recently arrived immigrants from Europe, the Jews, who in 1947 made up only 30 per cent of the population and owned only 6 per cent of the land and, in fact, violated Article 1 of the United Nations own “constitution” concerning the self-determination principle. Then, at the Security Council meeting on 19 March 1948, the Americans had announced that the United States could no longer abide by its own partition plan because of the pressure of the Jewish lobby, which thought that 56 per cent of the land was “not enough for the Zionists; they wanted all of it”. So, Israel got encouraged to take as much land as it could before May 1948, when the British were scheduled to leave the territories. This was the green light the Zionists had been waiting for to implement Plan Dalit, Plan D, the ethnic cleaning of Palestine, the Naqba. In the six to eight weeks that followed, over 300,000 Palestinians were forced to flee their homes in fear of their lives, mugged, mauled and murdered. At that point, the two-State solution was already dead. “Did the British, as a consequence of the Naqba, achieve their long-term strategic objectives?” he asked. They wanted to see a Zionist State emerge on the West Bank of the River Jordan, and an Arab Hashemite kingdom on the East Bank. And that is exactly what they got, he said. They never wanted to see an independent Palestinian State. In effect, both the United States and the United Kingdom blocked a two-State solution in 1948, and nothing, he thought, suggested that they had fundamentally changed their position.

103. Mr. Ferriman decried the top-down forces that for the past 60 years had opposed the Palestinian project and expected that the only power left that could confront the institutional opposition to a two-State solution was global civil society. It must be mobilized, he concluded.

104. The question of sanctions against Israel was raised by a number of speakers, including the possibility of their imposition by the Government of Japan. It emerged that the word “Palestine” itself had become like “a red rag to a bull” for the United States, which, said the speaker, would resist any pressure to change the status quo.

105. Several advocated for non-violent resistance, saying time was of the essence. In particular, concern was expressed about the unending settlement construction. There were also

comments and questions about whether the Government of Indonesia would be able to take on board as many countries as possible to support an international boycott at the State level to pressure Israel. Along with the combined purchasing power of the Arab world, that would be an effective tool.

106. Panellists pointed out the possibility of unilateral sanctions. In the case of Indonesia, since it did not have diplomatic relations with Israel, that was not possible because its national Constitution was against occupation. The point was also made that there was a national security exception to World Trade Organization rules, which would cover most political considerations. So perhaps the argument that the Government of Japan could not impose sanctions on Israel was not valid. The Philippines, said a panellist, had not considered sanctions, owing to the “United States factor”. The country had established diplomatic relations with Palestine and it supported the initiative of Palestine to become a United Nations Member. Questions also arose about what the Palestinian side was doing to get its own house in order, as well the economic loss to a future Palestinian State from years of occupation.

IV. Closing session

107. **Riyad Mansour** announced at the outset, that there would be an exchange of diplomatic representation between Palestine and Thailand as at 1 August: Abdelaziz Aboughosh would become the first Ambassador of Palestine to Thailand.

108. He said that when the Palestinians sought recognition of their statehood, they sought something that already existed, emphasizing that the State of Palestine exists and 132 countries had recognized it. Unfortunately, it was a State under occupation. The objectives of the Palestinian people were well known. Although they had not accomplished them, they had not changed their mind nor abandoned the struggle. He did not agree with speakers who had said the Palestinian people had to face reality on the issue of the settlements. There were so many turns, and ups and downs in the struggle that the final outcome remained open.

109. He confirmed that the situation was very difficult. Twenty years after the signing of the Oslo accords, the objective had not been accomplished, and now the settlement enterprise had become huge and was threatening the possibility of the two-State solution. There was a debate raging now among the Palestinian people and their leadership as to whether to continue towards the two-State solution or entertain the possibility of a one-State solution. If conditions allowed for the two-State solution, then it would remain in place, but if conditions did not, then the leadership and people would decide on another political platform.

110. He stressed that the Palestinian people and leadership were at a crossroads: either the Palestinians with the support of the international community would find a way to bring Israel into compliance with its obligations under international law and its Road Map obligations and stop the settlement activities, or something else was going to happen.

111. He recalled that there was a global consensus that the settlements were illegal, but if there were no consequences, there was no incentive for Israel to change its behaviour. President

Mahmoud Abbas was trying in every way to demonstrate his interest in negotiating, but the Israeli side was refusing to show flexibility. The only advice of the United States to the Palestinians was to return to negotiations. They did so, but repeating what had failed in the past and expecting different results was an exercise in futility. It was up to the Palestinian people to face that reality, to carry the torch and to try to open new ways to break the impasse.

112. When the Palestinians asked a country to recognize the State of Palestine, they were asking the country to invest in peace, in the “actualization of the end game”, he said. Palestinians had built State institutions; everyone, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations, knew they were ready, not only to end the occupation, but to have a State that would not be a failed State, but a successful one from day one. The goal was to convince the United States to go along with the rest. He emphasized that Palestinians wanted to negotiate the six final status issues with Israel because peace would not take place until those issues were negotiated and a peace treaty was reached. But Palestinian independence as an expression of self-determination was not negotiable. He worried that if the parties did not succeed soon in having a breakthrough in the peace process, other strategies would impose themselves, whether the Palestinian leadership liked it or not.

113. He asked how long could the Palestinian people wait before they exploded in the face of their occupier, as they did in the first Intifadah. The last card in their hands was to move into the international arena, to drag every Israeli general or official into the courts. If forced to do it, they would. Those tools were not available in 1987. The Palestinian leadership was saying “come and negotiate”, but stop the settlement activity because not only was it illegal, it was also becoming so dangerous that even if a peace treaty were reached, it might not be possible to implement it. If nothing happened soon to open the doors to negotiation, there was no force on the face of the Earth that could stop the power of the Palestinian people to accomplish their objectives, he declared.

114. Closing the session, the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, **Abdou Salam Diallo**, thanked the Government of Thailand, its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for facilitating the organization of the event. He also thanked the distinguished speakers for sharing their valuable insights and expertise.

115. The Chair said that, in the course of the two days, it had become obvious that the Palestinian leadership could not agree to re-starting serious negotiations while the Government of Israel continued to expand illegal settlements on Palestinian land. The same was true for the separation wall it was building, mostly in the occupied West Bank. Participants had commended the firm position of the international community to see a Palestinian State constituted within the 1967 borders, with minor adjustments, agreed in negotiations between the parties.

116. He recalled that the experts had pointed to the serious legal implications of Israel’s occupation policies, noting their warning that the credibility of the Fourth Geneva Convention was being eroded by the ongoing violations of Israel. The construction of the separation wall challenged the authority of the International Court of Justice, stressing that no member of the international community should be allowed to place itself above the law. The experts also

deplored that the condemnation of Israeli policies in the United Nations and other forums had not stopped settlement expansion. Concrete action by the international community was crucial and, in particular, the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention must live up to their obligations. The experts suggested a number of possible measures, including boycotts of settlement products and broader sanctions.

117. Pending the resumption of direct negotiations, the participants had called upon all countries to recognize the State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders, the Chair said. Clearly, the Palestinian people were prepared to have their own State. The Palestinian Rights Committee supported the efforts of the Palestinian leadership to become a member of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and it would continue to advocate for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

Annex I

Summary of the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

1. The United Nations Asian and Pacific Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, examined the consequences of the illegal construction of Israeli settlements and the wall on Palestinian land; their impact on the rights of the Palestinians and on the prospects for the fulfilment of the two-State solution; and the ways in which the international community, particularly the Asian and Pacific countries, civil society and parliamentarians could contribute to the lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. Representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and the media, together with expert speakers from the Asia and Pacific region – Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand – as well as from Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, shared their expertise at the Meeting.

2. In the opening session, the **Secretary-General of the United Nations**, in his message to the Meeting, stressed that Israel's continued settlement activity was contrary to international law and its Road Map commitments. He pointed to the escalation of violence between the settlers and the Palestinians and to the devastating impact of the Gaza blockade, stressed the importance of Palestinian reconciliation and called on all actors to act collectively to help steer the situation towards a historic peace agreement. The **Chair of the Committee** urged the countries of the Asia and Pacific region to play a bigger political role to match their growing economic clout, stressing that, together with intergovernmental organizations and civil society, they had much to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, and called on those Governments that had not done so, to recognize the State of Palestine. He furthermore thought the Security Council should be encouraged to travel to the region to witness the situation on the ground, and the Human Rights Council fact-finding mission on settlements should be dispatched without further delay. The **representative of Thailand** said the Governments, intergovernmental organizations and civil society shared the responsibility to help the parties resolve all the outstanding issues through negotiations, which had to be based on the principle of a two-State solution, as defined by the Road Map, relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. The **Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority**, representing Palestine, said that, owing to the construction of settlements and the wall, the prospects for a two-State solution were rapidly diminishing. If negotiations with Israel did not resume in due time, the Palestinians were planning to request the United Nations General Assembly to elevate its status to that of observer State. A number of **representatives of Governments and intergovernmental organizations** expressed messages of support for the State of Palestine within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and condemned such Israeli policies as the building of settlements and the wall and continued unlawful imprisonment of Palestinians, including women, children and parliamentarians.

3. The Meeting then reviewed the expansion of Israeli settlements since the signing of the Oslo accords to the present day, as well as the construction and the adverse consequences of the wall in the West Bank. It was noted that in the first seven years since 1993, when the peace

process first began and there were 180,000 settlers, their number more than doubled, as if the peace process had given Israel a green light to build and expand. Today, there were 600,000 settlers and an entire maze of restrictions that led to near-complete Israeli physical control – close to 60 per cent – of the West Bank. There were also more hidden aspects, such as the permit regime and a dual legal system: civilian law for Israelis and Israeli military law for Palestinians. The settlement project imposed hardship on the Palestinians, violating their human rights. Israel was confiscating some of their best agricultural areas and natural resources and strategically vital land, in spite of the fact that these acts are clearly illegal under international law, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, as reaffirmed numerous times by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council.

4. The wall, now about 62 per cent complete, has been built mostly on the Palestinian side of the Green Line. If completed, it would be 700 kilometres long, double the length of the Green Line, and would cut off 9.4 per cent of the West Bank, with all of East Jerusalem being on the western, or Israeli, side. Since the barrier cuts so deeply into the West Bank, some of the most important Palestinian agricultural areas are inaccessible to Palestinians. Approximately 7,500 Palestinians are currently caught between the Green Line and the wall, requiring permits to live in their own homes. In order to access their fields, health centres and schools, they have to pass through checkpoints and gates. If the building were to go as planned, nearly 30,000 Palestinians would be in that same situation. The construction of the wall was also linked to the settlements: if carried out as planned, 71 of 150 settlements in the West Bank would be encircled, and about 400,000 of the 500,000 West Bank settlers would be on the Israeli side and effectively annexed to Israel. Furthermore, the wall is increasingly separating East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank, effectively redrawing the geographic realities of Jerusalem. More than 80,000 East Jerusalem residents are now cut off from their own city. Again, these actions are in contravention of international law: the International Court of Justice, in its Advisory Opinion, stated that the wall is illegal and must be dismantled; the General Assembly, in a resolution, called on Israel to comply with the opinion of the Court.

5. The participants considered settlement building to be one of the greatest obstacles to the fulfilment of the vision of two States, noting that the settlement project was solidifying Israeli control over the Occupied Territory and ensuring that, under any future diplomatic arrangement, Israel would retain possession of vast and strategically important tracts of the Palestinian Territory. None of Israel's proposals contained the suggestion to completely scale back the settlements. In fact, Israel has succeeded in separating the peace process from the settlements, and is, rather than complying with international law, pushing to have the Palestinians "somehow accommodate these illegal settlements" through so-called land swaps, instead of the 1967 borders. According to some participants, settlements are intended to ensure that a genuinely sovereign Palestinian State never emerges in the Occupied Territory. There was agreement that settlements are illegal under international law, they have been built on confiscated Palestinian land, and they are making the possibility of a future viable Palestinian State increasingly less likely.

6. Regrettably, not much action to change the present situation could be expected from Israeli society in the near future, according to an Israeli participant. Brainwashing, which included a campaign of dehumanizing and demonizing the Palestinians, enabled the occupation

to endure without any doubts in the minds of Israelis, especially as life was good and quite safe in Israel. The Israeli public was oblivious to the occupation, including the social protests, which have completely ignored it. Widespread United States support for Israel, including diplomatic and military, was also identified as one of the main obstacles to changing the status quo.

7. In spite of the grim realities on the ground, the participants nevertheless felt that there were several things that could be done to steer the situation towards a solution. Some optimism was expressed regarding the reversibility of the settlement project. In particular, an Israeli expert thought that settlements were removable and could be evacuated in order to create the Palestinian State, as long as Israel was willing to do it. Many settlers would evacuate willingly in return for a generous compensation by the Government. A small minority might oppose evacuation, perhaps even violently, but the State of Israel would be “strong enough to deal with such resistance”. The expert also said, on a positive note, that more than 60 per cent on both sides supported the two-State solution along well known parameters: a non-militarized Palestine based on the 1967 lines with mutual land swaps and East Jerusalem as the capital and “Jewish Jerusalem” as the capital of Israel; detailed security arrangements; a fair and agreed upon solution to the refugee problem; and mutual recognition of and agreement on the end of claims and conflict, which were also the parameters of the Geneva Initiative.

8. The Meeting identified different areas and levels at which action could be taken. At the Governmental level, the countries of the Asia and Pacific region that have not yet done so should recognize the State of Palestine and establish full diplomatic relations with the Palestinian sovereign entity. They should also consider imposing sanctions – either against settlement products or against Israel itself - to force Israel into compliance with international law. Diplomatic efforts should be made at every opportunity, and individual countries and groups of countries should exert pressure on the Security Council to live up to its Charter responsibilities. A passage of a Security Council resolution calling for a two-State solution based on the previously mentioned parameters would be helpful. Doubts were expressed, however, that the Security Council would give the matter the time and energy it required; the participants felt the inclination of the Council was to manage the conflict, rather than resolve it. Governments could also get the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to adopt a common position in support of the immediate establishment of a Palestinian State. Finally, the region must be more responsive to the humanitarian needs of the Palestinians, including by contributing to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and to capacity-building of the Palestinian Authority.

9. The possible involvement of new players that could change the dynamic in the peace process was also discussed. The participant from Japan shared that young parliamentarians in Japan felt that their country should step up its presence in the peace process. In particular, Japan could become an honest broker in the Middle East, as it had no colonial history and no special relationship with any communities in the region, was essentially free of religion, had no connection with the Holocaust and no interest in the sale of weapons. At the same time, the issue was relevant to Japan’s interests, as its economy was totally dependent on Middle East oil and therefore depended on the stability of that region. Japan was also one of Palestine’s largest donors. The participant thought Japan would be a good candidate to join the Middle East Quartet.

10. The participants stressed the importance of civil society action. There was hope owing to the resilience of the Palestinian people, who continued to oppose the occupation and to protest against land grabs and the policy of administrative detention and had won some battles. There was hope in the youth; the Palestinian Territory and the Arab world as a whole had a very young population, determined to fight for their rights. There were currently many solidarity movements around the world; one of them was the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement, which has had real success. In this connection, it was important to make the Palestinian question relevant to the ordinary population in the region so that they would mobilize and support these movements. The participants called upon civil society actors to use their voices to mobilize, drawing inspiration from the historical experience in the Afro-Asian region, when people rose against what appeared to be immovable forces – colonialism, racism, discrimination and apartheid – and achieved change. Governments should support the boycott of imports from and exports to the illegal Israeli settlements. Such moves would be important steps towards mustering a critical mass of global support for a lasting settlement and the establishment of a Palestinian State.

11. The peace campaign in Israel was important and had to be bolstered. The Israeli public had to understand the link between the occupation and their situation, leading to a change in the policies of their Government; this would happen if Israel would pay for the cost of the occupation. Also, if the “old and new” Arab world reintroduced the Arab Peace Initiative and emphasized once again that peace with the Palestinians meant full normalization for Israel with the entire neighbourhood and beyond; then the message for the Israeli public would be very clear. It was also important to work towards making the occupation relevant to the American people, so that they act and change the policies of their Government. The role of the media was stressed as a medium to help the people make the connection, as well as to keep the attention focused on the Palestinian question, which should be in the headlines until it is resolved. The social media, in particular, had the capacity to influence large sections of the population, particularly the youth, and should be used as a tool to reach out to them. The importance of restating the truth, as many times as the falsehood was asserted, was also stressed. Finally, the participants insisted that certain parameters had to be respected in the peace process: the viability of a future Palestinian State would require land and other natural resources and clear sovereign borders. It was the duty of the international community to ensure that none of those elements were forgotten or compromised.

12. In the closing session, the **Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations** shared the frustration of the Palestinian people at the current situation, noting that currently the two-State solution was still in their national programme; however, that could change, if no progress was made. He set out the main elements of the Palestinian strategy to end the occupation, which included national reconciliation; popular resistance against the occupation; and moving into the international area as the State of Palestine, through requests for membership in the United Nations and its agencies. He also announced that there would be an exchange of diplomatic representation between Palestine and Thailand as at 1 August 2012. The **Chair of the Committee** closed the Meeting by reasserting the support of the Committee for the efforts of the Palestinian leadership to become a Member of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and its intention to continue to advocate for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

Annex II**List of participants****Speakers**

Mr. Abdelaziz Aboughosh
Ambassador of Palestine to Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei Darussalam
Kuala Lumpur

Mr. Gadi Baltiansky
Director-General, Geneva Initiative in Israel
Tel Aviv

Mr. Walden Bello
Member of the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines
Manila

Ms. Diana Buttu
Joint Fellow with the Middle East Initiative and the Harvard Law School Human Rights Program
Former Legal Adviser, PLO Negotiations Affairs Department
Ramallah

Mr. Ray Dolphin
Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Barrier Specialist, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian
Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat
Jerusalem

Mr. Nick Ferriman
Vice-Chairperson, Palestine Solidarity Campaign Thailand
Bangkok

Mr. Nidal Foqaha
Director-General, Palestinian Peace Coalition - Geneva Initiative
Ramallah

Mr. Li Guofu
Senior Research Fellow, China Institute of International Studies
Beijing

Mr. Kamal Hossain
Jurist, former member of the Inquiry Commission, United Nations Commission on Human Rights
Dhaka

Ms. Hind Houry
Former General Delegate of Palestine to France, former Minister of Jerusalem Affairs,
Palestinian Authority
Jerusalem

Mr. Hasan Kleib
Director-General for Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Indonesia

Mr. Taro Kono
Member of the House of Representatives of Japan
Tokyo

Mr. Gideon Levy
Columnist, *Ha'aretz*
Tel Aviv

Mr. Riad Malki
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Palestinian Authority
Ramallah

Mr. Mahathir Mohamad
Former Prime Minister of Malaysia
Putrajaya

Mr. Iain Scobbie
Sir Joseph Hotung Research Professor in Law, School of Oriental and African Studies,
University of London
London

**Delegation of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**

Mr. Abdou Salam Diallo
Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations
Chair of the Committee

Mr. Desra Percaya
Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations

Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith
Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations

Mr. Husni Zai Yaacob
Deputy Secretary-General (Bilateral Affairs)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia

Mr. Riyad Mansour
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

Governments

Argentina
Ms. Ana María Ramírez, Ambassador
Embassy in Thailand

Bangladesh
Mr. Kazi Imtiaz Hossain, Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the Economic
and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Ms. Sadia Faizunnesa, Counsellor (Political)
Embassy in Thailand

Brazil
Mr. Eduardo Cañado Oliveira, Counsellor
Embassy in Thailand

Brunei Darussalam
Ms. Zamiah Haliluddin, Second Secretary
Embassy in Thailand

Canada
Ms. Cassandra Mathies
Political and Economic Section
Embassy in Thailand

China
Mr. Xu Qin, Political Counsellor
Mr. Wang Xiaochu, Attaché
Embassy in Thailand

Egypt
Mr. Shamel Nasser, Ambassador
Mr. Hatem El-Nashar, Counsellor
Mr. Ahmad El Badawy, Third Secretary
Embassy in Thailand

India

Ms. Nagma M. Mallick, Deputy Chief of Mission
Mr. Prashant Agrawal, Counsellor
Embassy in Thailand

Indonesia

Mr. Hasan Kleib, Director General, Multilateral Affairs
Mr. Irfan Abdullah, Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jakarta
Mr. Lutfi Rauf, Ambassador
Ms. Carolina Tinangon, First Secretary
Embassy in Thailand

Kazakhstan

Ms. Alтынay Dyussekaeva, First Secretary
Embassy in Thailand

Kenya

Mr. Peter Owiti Oplyo, First Secretary
Embassy in Thailand

Malaysia

Mr. Husni Zai Yaacob, Deputy Secretary-General (Bilateral Affairs)
Mr. Zainal Izran Zahari, Principal Assistant Secretary, West Asia Division
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia
Mr. Tajul Aman Mohammad, Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the Economic
and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Mr. Zamrykhan Munir, Counsellor
Mr. Nazarudin Jaafar, First Secretary
Mr. Somkid Deelua, Administrative Assistant
Embassy in Thailand

Morocco

Mr. Mohamed Majdi, Ambassador to Indonesia
Mr. Abderrazaq Nabil, Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Embassy in Thailand

Namibia

Mr. Gebhard B. Kandanga, High Commissioner of the Republic of Namibia to Malaysia
Kuala Lumpur

Nauru

Mr. Corey Menke, Vice Consul
Embassy in Thailand

Pakistan

Mr. Syed Zafar Ali Shah, Commercial Counsellor and Alternate Permanent Representative to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Embassy in Thailand

Philippines

Mr. Nathaniel G. Imperial, Executive Director
Office of Middle East and African Affairs
Department of Foreign Affairs

Portugal

Mr. Jorge Torres Pereira, Ambassador
Embassy in Thailand

Qatar

Mr. Jabor Ali Hussain Al-Dosseri, Ambassador
Mr. Mohamed Elimam, Political Analyst
Mr. Adel Slimani, Economic Analyst
Mr. Talal Al-Anzil, Consul
Mr. Ali M.K. Albinaly, Attaché
Embassy in Thailand

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Abdulsalam Abdullah R. Alenazi, Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Mr. Nazar F. Abdulgader Fadlalla, Administrative Officer
Embassy in Thailand

South Africa

Ms. Robina Patricia Marks, Ambassador
Mr. Raymond Walter Manzini, First Secretary
Embassy in Thailand

Thailand

Mr. Pichet Wangtepanukhor, Adviser to the Minister for Foreign Affairs
Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi, Director-General, Department of International Organizations
Mrs. Sirichada Thongtan, Acting Director, Peace, Security and Disarmament Division
Mr. Khanthong Nuanual, First Secretary, Office of the Foreign Minister
Ms. Sudkanueng Nivesratana, Second Secretary, Peace, Security and Disarmament Division
Mr. Narong Silpathamtada, Second Secretary, Peace Security and Disarmament Division
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Bangkok

Timor-Leste

Ms. Atanasia Pires, First Secretary
Embassy in Thailand

Turkey

Mr. Oguz Celikkol, Ambassador

Mrs. Ayse Inanc Ornekol, Counsellor

Embassy in Thailand

United States of America

Ms. Kimberly L. Skoglund, Second Secretary

Ms. Sara A. Scarbro, Second Secretary

Ms. Kristina D. Law, Third Secretary and Vice-Consul

Mr. Colby Potter, Third Secretary

Embassy in Thailand

**Entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers
in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly and maintaining
permanent observer missions at Headquarters**

Palestine

Mr. Riad Malki, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Palestinian Authority

Mr. Abdelaziz Aboughosh, Ambassador of Palestine to Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei

Darussalam

Kuala Lumpur

Intergovernmental organizations

Non-Aligned Movement

H. E. Mr. Shamel Nasser, Ambassador

Embassy in Thailand

United Nations organs, agencies and bodies

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Mr. Elly Zar, Intern

Bangkok

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Ms. Marina Colozzi, Editorial Assistant

Bangkok

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Ms. Mariko Sato, Chief of the UN-Habitat Bangkok Office

Bangkok

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
 Ms. Carly Timm, Consultant on Asia Pacific Forum for Environment and Development
 Programme
 UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
 Bangkok

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
 Mr. Danilo Padilla, Liaison Officer, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Asia
 and the Pacific
 Bangkok

Civil society organizations

Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development
 Ms. Noor Diyana Binti Yahaya, Programme Officer
 Chiangmai

Asian Muslim Action Network, International Institute of Peace Study
 Mr. Ekraj Sabur, Director
 Bangkok

Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches/
 Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)
 Reverend Alan Sarte, EAPPI National Coordinator
 Quezon City

Council of Muslim Organizations in Thailand
 Mr. Sarawoot Sriwannayos, Chairman
 Mr. Chevin Chayachawalit, Adviser
 Mr. Abdulloh Pohza, Adviser
 Bangkok

Crescent International School
 Mr. Ibrahima Naite, Principal
 Bangkok

Human Security Alliance
 Mr. Shekh Mohammad Altafur Rahman, Executive Director
 Bangkok

Metropolitan Research Trust
 Mr. Ray W. Archer, Director
 Bangkok

Muslim Students Federation of Thailand

Mr. Azhar Sarimachi, President

Ms. Asma Tanyongdaoh

Mr. Muslim Dokho

Mr. Amin Chelong

Mr. Ilyas Mali

Mr. Mahama Udnan Maseng

Mr. Muhammad Jee-wae

Bangkok

Perdana Global Peace Foundation

Ms. Zulaiha Ismail, Executive Director

Mr. Pahamin A. Rajab, Senior Associate

Mr. Tan Sri Samsudin Bin Hitam, Trustee

Ms. Puan Sri Normah Othman

Kuala Lumpur

Palestine Solidarity Campaign Thailand

Mr. Stuart Ward, Chairperson

Mr. Sune Larsson, Secretary

Mr. Parkorn Priyakorn, Executive Members

Mr. Helmut Abel

Mr. Alexander Frediani

Mr. Beng O M Juhlint

Mr. Sam Khoury

Mr. Chit Ko Ko Oo

Mr. Marut Mekloy

Mr. Imtiaz Muqbic

Mr. Amrin Pechtongkam

Mr. Sarayuth Pechtongkam

Mr. Eric Alan Ward

Mr. Fuad Yusuf Mohamed

Mr. Cuno van Voorst

Bangkok

Thai Muslim Student Association

Mr. Munsir Sri-Adulphun, Secretary General

Mr. Tuan-Ameen Da-ohmareeyor

Mr. Abdulhakeem Samae

Bangkok

Media

MCOT Online News (Mass Communications Organization of Thailand-Thai News Agency)
Mr. Lance Randolph Woodruff, English News Editor

Travel Impact Newswire
Bangkok
Mr. Imtiaz Muqbil, Executive Editor

White Channel (Muslim Satellite TV)
Mr. Metee Mooktaree, Reporter

Special guest

Professor Kraisaak Choonhavan
Member of National Assembly
Honorary President, Palestine Solidarity Campaign Thailand
Bangkok

Public

Ms. Kaori Kono
Ms. Yumiko Toyoda
Mr. Khobtham Neelapaichit
Mr. Anuphat Permterm
Ms. Carmel Goldwater
Ms. Rachelle Aguilar
Mr. Thomas Dallal
Mr. Nattapat Thannusorn
Ms. Kristal Piñeros

* * *