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Plenary on Item 11b:
Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people

Speaker: The European Union

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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

**60th SESSION TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

60th Session

(Geneva, 16-27 September 2013)

Item 11b

Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people

Mr President,
Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

We thank the Secretariat for its annual 'Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory'. We acknowledge the work of UNCTAD's "Assistance to the Palestinian People Unit" in assessing the situation and prospects of the Palestinian economy, examining obstacles to trade and development and assisting Palestinian people through several projects. We look forward to the publication of an in-depth assessment of leakage of Palestinian revenue later this year.

Developments in the Palestinian economic situation and ways to address the financial situation of the Palestinian Authority will also be discussed on the 25 of September at the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee in New York hosted by UNSG Ban Ki Moon. The European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Lady Ashton, will attend this meeting.

We are concerned about the fiscal situation of the Palestinian Authority and continue to call for the lifting of restrictions on the Palestinian economy. The Palestinian Authority must also pursue deeper structural reforms.

Overall the European Commission has provided last year more than 400 Million euros in support to the Palestinian people including more than 130 Million euros to Palestinian refugees through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

The EU and its MS continue to provide the largest share of funding to the Palestinian Authority, thus contributing to efforts to build the institutions of a future Palestinian State, for instance through 'PEGASE'. "PEGASE" is a European programme dedicated to help build the institutions of the future independent Palestinian State, which supports sustained delivery of basic public services in the West Bank and Gaza with a direct impact on the well-being of Palestinians. The total contribution of the EU and its MS to 'PEGASE' in 2013 has reached 189 Million euros.

The ultimate objective of EU co-operation with the Palestinian Authority is building the institutional capacity of the organisation which should be the foundation of a future Palestinian State, living side by side with Israel in peace and security. We remain committed –alongside the UN partners– towards conflict resolution, safeguarding the viability of a two-state solution and welcome the resumption of direct talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis, hoping that these talks will lead to tangible and timely progress.

I thank you M. President.

