



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA TO UNOG

**REMARKS BY H.E. MS. SABINE BÖHLKE-MÖLLER AMBASSADOR/
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, ON
BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP, AT 63RD SESSION OF THE TRADE AND
DEVELOPMENT BOARD, GENEVA, 8 DECEMBER 2016**

Agenda Item 6(b) - Report on UNCTAD's Assistance to the Palestinian people

Mr. President,
Deputy Secretary General Joakim Reiter,
Distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the African Group, I would like to thank the UNCTAD secretariat for the preparation of the report on UNCTAD **Assistance to the Palestinian People: Development in the Economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory**. I would also like to thank Deputy Secretary General Reiter for his opening remarks Mr. Mahmoud Elkhafif for introducing the report. While African Group aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Argentina, on behalf of the G.77 & China, allow me to make additional remarks on behalf of the Group.

Mr. President,

The African Group is concerned that every year the Board considers the report under this item, one fact remains constant, that the **situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has further deteriorated**. The current report is no exception as it paints a gloomy picture which reveals unimaginable suffering of the Palestinian people, due to among others, the state of the economy, severe unemployment, poverty and insecurity, all of which are direct consequences of the prolonged foreign occupation.

UNCTAD's technical cooperation is crucial to all developing countries, and more so to the Palestinian people, as such, the African Group commends UNCTAD's work in assisting the Palestinian People to address their trade and development needs. These include the development of the trade facilitation capacity of the Palestinian private sector, advisory services to key Palestinian institutions such as the Central Bureau of Statistics and training of Palestinian professionals on key economic policy areas. Needless to say, UNCTAD does this under strenuous circumstances.

Mr. President,

Paragraph 55 (dd) of the Nairobi Maafikiano, among others, calls on UNCTAD to *strengthen its programme of assistance to the Palestinian people with adequate resources and effective operational activities, including relevant studies as part of the international community's commitment to building an independent Palestine, and with a view to alleviating the adverse economic and social conditions imposed on the Palestinian people.*

In our view, for UNCTAD to strengthen its programme of assistance to the Palestinian people, it will require additional resources both human and financial. To that end, the African Group joins the call for increase in the regular budget on the assistance to the Palestinian people. We also support the recommendation contained in the report, for the establishment of a framework, within the UN system, under the leadership of UNCTAD, to assess and report to the General Assembly on the economic cost of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people, in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions.

Finally, Mr. President, the African Group would like to express its solidarity with the Palestinian people and with their struggle for freedom, justice and economic development. We are confident that UNCTAD's activities, in support of the Palestinian people, strengthen the efforts of the international community towards a comprehensive and lasting peace in Palestine.

I thank you.