

**GRULAC UNCTAD
G E N E V A**

**STATEMENT BY GUATEMALA ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF LATIN
AMERICAN AND THE CARIBBEAN STATES (GRULAC) AT THE 64TH SESSION OF
THE TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**Agenda Item 12 (b) - Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people:
Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory**

Tuesday, 19 September 2017 (morning session)

Mr. Chair, Taavo Lumiste (Estonia),
Her Excellency Ms. Abeer Odeh, Minister of National Economy, State of Palestine,
Ms. Isabelle Durand, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD
Mr. Mahmoud Elkhafif, Coordinator, Assistance to the Palestinian People, Division on
Globalization and Development Strategies
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. The Group of Latin America and the Caribbean would like to express its appreciation to UNCTAD's Assistance to the Palestinian People Unit for a good, concise and informative report about the dire economic conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory. UNCTAD's report highlights the major obstacles to Palestinian trade and development and brings to the attention of the Trade and Development Board the staggering economic cost imposed on the Palestinian people by the prolonged occupation which has entered its 50th year.
2. The group notes that although there has been a 4.1. percent growth in GDP in 2016, the productive capacity of the Palestinian economy continued to erode, the economic performance was far below potential and unemployment persisted at high levels. We also note the worrisome decline of the industrial and agricultural sectors that may stifle economic and technological progress and diminish the capacity of producers to export.
3. GRULAC notes the Palestinian efforts that succeeded in reducing the budget deficit to 8% of GDP in 2016 and would like to emphasize that the international community should strengthen the Palestinian National Authority capacity to provide basic services to the Palestinian people by reversing the negative trend in donor aid at a time when occupation is hollowing out the Palestinian economy and its tax base.
4. GRULAC would like to commend the work of UNCTAD in 2016 to support the Palestinian people, particularly in the areas of trade, trade facilitation, and the establishment of a new Professional Diploma Training Programme on Supply Chain Management.
5. GRULAC notes the urgent need for renewed cooperation to introduce updates for the ASYCUDA version currently being used by Palestinian customs, and the need to reintroduce the UNCTAD Debt Management and Financial Analysis System DMFAS and calls on donors to provide the necessary funds to cover this assistance.

6. GRULAC also emphasizes the need to give full implementation to paragraph 55(dd) of the Nairobi Maafikiano, which mandates the strengthening of UNCTAD's program of Assistance to the Palestinian people, with adequate resources and effective operational activities.

7. Before I conclude, I would like to remark that the members of GRULAC who are part of the Group of 77 and China associate ourselves with the statement made by the G77 and China.

Thank you Mr. Chair.