



**GROUP OF 77 & CHINA
G E N E V A**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. JAMES ALEX MSEKELA
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED
REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA,
CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA ON THE REPORT ON
UNCTAD'S ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (TD/B/64)
ITEM 12B, 2017**

**AT THE SIXTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE TRADE AND
DEVELOPMENT BOARD, GENEVA, 11–22 SEPTEMBER 2017**

**Mr. President,
Ms. Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates.**

Mr. President,

At the outset, the G77 and China would like to commend UNCTAD Assistance to the Palestinian People Unit for the informative report, which highlights the key issues related to economic development in the Palestinian territory after 50 years of occupation. UNCTAD persuasive report shows that for the Palestinian people the past five decades were an era of de-development, suppressed human potential, mass unemployment, denial of the basic human right to development; with no end in sight for the Palestinian people.

Mr. President,

UNCTAD report clearly indicates that due to this collective punishment by a tight land, sea and air blockade and three consecutive Israeli wars, Gaza's economic performance has been the worst in the world over the past two decades. The report also state that this prolonged economic siege has resulted in severe humanitarian crises, food-insecurity and deep dependency on aid. Furthermore, it is more alarming that there is acute shortage in electricity, which further paralyses all economic activities in the Gaza Strip where two millions people

live. Meanwhile reconstruction efforts have been too slow and too weak to respond adequately to the reconstruction needs.

Mr. President,

The G77 and China commend UNCTAD for highlighting the structural deformation and the continuous process of de-agriculturalization and de-industrialization caused by occupation. This imposed economic distortion aims at depriving the Palestinian people of their ability to produce, and thus cultivates dependence on the Israeli economy to import goods and services paid for by international aid and the remittances of expatriate Palestinian workers.

Mr. President,

The G77 and China note with grave concern the high unemployment which stands at 27 percent and was much worse in Gaza. It is shocking that today 42 percent of Gaza's workforce is jobless. We concur with UNCTAD report's warning that unless current trends are reversed, unemployment will widen and poverty and food-insecurity will deepen and exacerbate the risk of political crises fueled by further economic decline.

Mr. President,

The group note with concern that the extremely high unemployment among youth is at of 15-29 years age group. At 27 percent in the West Bank and 56 per cent in Gaza, Palestinian youth unemployment rates are the highest in the region. The G77 and China agree with the report recommendation that this problems needs a special attention from Palestinian policy makers and the international community because what is at stake, as UNCTAD's excellent report warns, is the future of the Palestinian people and whether or not generations of Palestinian youth will grow to realize their human potential, like all the young people around the world, or will be lost to unemployment and socioeconomic despair.

Mr. President,

The G77 and China are alarmed by the continuing loss of Palestinian land and natural resources to the expanding Israeli settlements. As clearly stated by the UN Security Council Resolution 2334 of December 2016, these settlements are a flagrant violation, under international law. The settlements are defacto annexation

of West Bank land; they also lead to the fragmentation of the Palestinian economy into disconnected island markets and regions. It is alarming to know that the Israeli population in the illegal settlements increased from 100,000 in 1994 to more than 600,000. With complete denial and violation of the last Security Council Resolution 2334, which demands Israel to immediately and completely cease all settlement activities, Israel, the occupying power, continued and intensified the building in settlements.

Mr. President,

We call upon the International Community to consider for the establishment within the UN system, under UNCTAD leadership, of a framework to assess and report to the international community and the General Assembly on the economic cost of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people as requested by the relevant UN resolutions, including General Assembly resolutions 69/20, 70/12 and 71/20.

Mr. President,

The G77 and China appreciates UNCTAD's continuous provision of technical assistance to the Palestinian people which is needed for building the economic and institutional capacities of the future, sovereign Palestinian state. It is reassuring that numerous institutions benefited from UNCTAD initiatives, advisory services, and technical cooperation initiatives.

Mr. President,

We also note with grave concern that UNCTAD program of Assistance to the Palestinian people has not been strengthened by adequate resources as emphasized by paragraph 55(dd) of the Nairobi Maafikiano, which was adopted by the consensus of member states. We therefore call on UNCTAD management and Member States to extend additional regular budget as well as extra-budgetary resources to UNCTAD so that it can fulfil paragraph 55(dd) of the Maafikiano as well as paragraphs 9 of resolutions 69/20, 70/12 and 71/20, which request UNCTAD to assess and report to the General Assembly on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people.

Mr. President,

Finally, our Group commends the Palestinian people for their just struggle and call upon the international community to work together towards achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and the establishment of an independent state of Palestine in line with the relevant UN resolution.

I thank you Mr. President.