



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

**Statement of His Excellency Mr. Marcelo Cima  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Argentina,  
Chairman of the Group of 77 and China in Geneva  
At the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Trade and Development Board  
*Geneva, 5-9 December 2016***

**Agenda Item 6(b) - Report on UNCTAD's Assistance to the Palestinian people  
*Thursday, 8 December 2016***

Mr. President, H.E. Mr. Christopher Onyanga Aparr (Uganda)  
Mr. Joakim Reiter, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD,  
Mr. Mahmoud Elkhafif, Coordinator, Assistance to the Palestinian People, Division on  
Globalization and Development Strategies,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

Mr. President,

1. I would like to thank the secretariat for its presentation and its report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people, which provides an important summary of the state of the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory and UNCTAD's continuous efforts to help the Palestinian people build the capacities essential for achieving economic development, and mitigating the severity of unemployment, poverty, and food-insecurity.

2. UNCTAD's report paints a bleak picture of progressively worsening socioeconomic conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory. As a result of occupation, today one in four Palestinians cannot find work, poverty is deep and wide, infant mortality is high.

Mr. President,

3. The loss of land and water has resulted in the demise of Palestinian agriculture and manufacturing. The magnitude of the problem can be seen from the fact that between 1975-2014, the contribution of the agricultural and industrial sector to GDP dropped by half, from 37 to 18%, while their contribution to employment decreased from 47 to 23%.

Mr. President,

4. The G77 and China would like to commend UNCTAD for highlighting the cost of occupation, and agrees that the Palestinian people are being deprived of their right to development and the ability to produce and achieve self-sufficiency. The denial of the right to development that affect present generations of Palestinians also entails the denial of the right of future generations to work, education, safe water and food security, among others. However, as the reports states, not all occupation-related costs can be evaluated monetarily either because of the psychological costs for the occupied, or in moral costs for the international community.

5. Furthermore, without occupation, the Palestinian economy could easily produce twice its current GDP and most studies cover only the direct cost of the occupation. The cumulative cost over time is even worse. Assessments focusing on the property and human capital losses of the Palestinian indicate that these losses amount to hundreds of billions of dollars. The group urges UNCTAD to take the leadership to establish a framework to assess the full and real economic cost of the occupation for the Palestinian people and report its findings to the UN General Assembly.

6. The G77 and China would like to appreciate UNCTAD for developing the trade facilitation capacity of the Palestinian private sector so that it can adopt best practices in trade facilitation. We would also like to commend UNCTAD for its continuous advisory services to key Palestinian institutions such as the Central Bureau of Statistics, and for providing training to Palestinian professionals on key economic policy areas.

7. The G77 and China appreciate the difficult complex field conditions and the resource constraints facing UNCTAD's programme on Assistance to the Palestinian people. Yet, despite the extremely complex and constraining field conditions, UNCTAD's program has proved itself to be a valuable model for the provision of development assistance under extremely severe and uniquely adverse conditions. Therefore we call upon UNCTAD to strengthen its programme on assistance to the Palestinian people with additional regular budget resources as called for by paragraph 55(dd) of the Nairobi Maafikiano, and also in line with Accra Accord and Doha Mandate.

Thank you Mr. President.