

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Mustafa Osman Ismail Elamin
Permanent Representative of Sudan,
On behalf of the African Group
Trade and development report, Sixty-Fifth Session (Part II) of Trade and Development
Board, Geneva, 1–4 October 2018.**

**Mr. President,
Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates.**

Mr. President,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group. The Group fully associates itself to the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan on behalf of G.77 and China.

Mr. President,

The African Group would like to compliment UNCTAD for an insightful, professional, informative and outstanding report on the key issues affecting the welfare of the Palestinian People. The Group agree with the report that occupation has fostered an economic structure of dependence. The restrictions Israel imposed on the Palestinian economy weakened investment by inflating costs and depressed the Palestinian produces' competitiveness. More specifically, in line with the findings of UNCTAD's incisive report, the African Group regrets the decline in donor support, Israel's expansion of its illegal Settlements in Palestinian land and the high unemployment levels; especially among Palestinian youth and women.

Mr. President,

The African group expresses deep concerns regarding the persistently weak economic performance in the OPT as GDP growth has not been keeping pace with the population growth leading to further decline in GDP per capita. The decline of average real incomes and the 4 percent drop in GDP per capita in Gaza are especially alarming. The fact that unemployment in the occupied Palestinian territory is the highest in the world can only lead to wide and deep poverty. The politico-economic conditions behind this mass unemployment need to be addressed considering UNCTAD's relevant and perceptive policy recommendations articulated in this report and other reports and policy studies.

The African group notes the severity of the Israeli occupation, its restrictions and its negative consequences on the Palestinian economy and commend the UNCTAD for providing, rigours, and systematic evidence on the impact of these restrictions. Mr. Chairman, the restrictions and trade barriers resulted in 34-45 per cent productivity decline in the agricultural sector while the dual use list costs the West Bank 5 per cent of its GDP. We agree with the UNCTAD report that occupation and the tight restrictions are the root causes of confrontations and heightened political instability.

Mr. President,

The African group commend UNCTAD outstanding report for highlighting the severity of the economic crises and continuation of the cycle of de-development as a grave humanitarian crisis deepens in Gaza. The Israeli military strikes in 2008/09 and 2014 wiped out over 90 percent of Gaza's total capital stock. The most worrying fact is that Gaza have the highest unemployment in the world. Gaza has been turned into a humanitarian case with over two million Palestinians living in severe conditions lacking the bare minimum of human rights and needs. Half of the population in Gaza is food insecure, 80 percent is aid dependent and people are 30 % poorer compared to 1999.

Mr. President,

The African group is disheartened by the severe energy and water crises in Gaza. Sometimes the people of Gaza receive no more than two hours of electricity per day and less than 10 per cent of the population in Gaza have access to clean water. This forces the people to resort to uncontrolled, unsafe and much more costly alternatives.

It is well highlighted by UNCTAD's first-rate report that this severe electricity crisis impacts productive activities and impedes delivery of basic services such as medical care, education, sanitation and hygiene. The African group regrets that healthcare providers find it hard to maintain and operate sensitive medical equipment including heart monitors, incubators and MRI.

Mr. President,

The African group find it deeply worrisome that unemployment in Gaza is the highest in the world. The fact that half the Palestinian under 30 are unemployed and one-third of those in the 15-24 age group is NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) is shocking. The Palestinian youth is deprived of their right to develop and contribute to the world and to their society, economy and culture.

Mr. President,

The African Group find it regrettable that paragraph 55(dd) of the Nairobi Maafikiano, as well as four General Assembly resolutions, have not been implemented yet, mainly due to lack of the resources. The Group urges UNCTAD management and Member States to provide sufficient additional regular and extra-budgetary resources, including two professional posts, to enable UNCTAD Program of Assistance to the Palestinian People to implement the mandate of the Maafikiano, respond to the UN General Assembly resolutions and to continue the provision of its valuable expertise, technical cooperation, research and advisory services in favour of the Palestinian people.

Finally, **Mr. President**, we express our solidarity with the Palestinian people especially in Gaza and call the international community to stand by them to live in their own state, without occupation, and as full, equal members in the global family.