

**Statement delivered by Egypt on behalf of the African Group at
the 73st regular session of the Trade and Development Council
Item 6: Report on UNCTAD's assistance to the Palestinian people**

Mr. President,

Mr. Acting Secretary-General

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The African Group expresses its appreciation to UNCTAD's Unit for Assistance to the Palestinian People for its important work and for the timely report on the deeply concerning economic developments in the occupied Palestinian Territory.

Year after year the annual report highlights the severe and persistent crisis facing the Palestinian economy. This crisis is not solely a consequence of the war in Gaza, but also reflects decades of occupation and intensified restrictions in the West Bank.

The African Group underscores the importance of continuing to assess and report on the economic costs of the occupation in the Palestinian occupied territory. Longstanding structural constraints have weakened productive capacities, increased poverty and economic dependency, and severely limited the prospects for sustainable development.

Mr. President,

While the report indicates a slight improvement in some economic indicators, the overall situation remains deeply concerning. The West Bank economy significantly below pre-crisis levels. In Gaza, the limited rebound in economic activity follows an unprecedented contraction of 83 per cent in 2024, including the destruction of 92 per cent of Gaza's economic establishments. With more than unprecedented rates of unemployed, and development prospects that have been severely undermined.

The scale of Gaza's recovery and reconstruction needs is immense, estimated by \$71 billion.

The African Group urges the international community to support reconstruction and recovery in Gaza and to restore a decent and dignified life for the people of Gaza.

Mr. President,

We are equally concerned by the socioeconomic consequences of the continued expansion of settlements and outposts, which exceeded 300 by 2025, and the increasing fragmentation of the West Bank. These developments restrict access to land and resources, disrupt economic activity and further undermine the foundations of a viable Palestinian economy.

The African Group reiterates that peace, stability and economic development will not be achieved without guaranteeing the Palestinian people their inalienable rights, foremost among them the right to self-determination and the realization of an independent Palestinian state.

In closing,

the African Group calls upon UNCTAD and its Member States to ensure that the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People has the resources necessary to fully implement its mandate, including assessing the economic costs of the Israeli occupation and supporting recovery and reconstruction.

Peace and development are mutually reinforcing. We call for a peace that enables development, and development that sustains peace.

Thank you, Mr. President.