

**Statement by the Delegation of Mexico  
on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean  
at the 71<sup>st</sup> Executive Session of the Trade and Development Board**

*Item 5: Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people*

*17 February 2022*

President of the Trade and Development Board Ambassador Maimuna Tarishi of Tanzania,  
Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Ms. Rebeca Grynspan,  
Chief of UNCTAD's Assistance to the Palestinian People Unit, Mr. Mahmoud Elkhafif,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates

1. On behalf of GRULAC, I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretariat for the thorough preparation of this report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
2. There is no doubt that the coronavirus pandemic has impacted growth and development around the world, and deepened inequalities. The impact for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as it is highlighted by the report, has even farther ramifications. The fact that 2020 was the worst year for the Palestinian people since 1994, with a contraction of its economy by 11.5 percent, only shows the severity of the pandemic impact and the impediments to development caused by the occupation.
3. As the report points out, the pandemic spread, and the lockdown measures curtailed economic activities. Thus, contractions were seen in all sectors; tourism, construction, services, industrial and agricultural sectors showed all declines, while unemployment increased.
4. We are concerned for the falling GDP per capita, declining trends in foreign aid, and persistent extreme levels of unemployment, which are widening and deepening poverty.
5. In particular, the impact of the lockdowns referred in the report, have exposed the constraints on the health system. They have shown, as well, the fiscal, logistical and access-related constraints that had limited the ability of the Palestinian government to respond adequately to these challenges, and had caused a concerning increase in public and private debt.
6. Other challenges that raise concerns about a possibility of recovering development, are also mentioned in the report: the rudimentary and underdeveloped infrastructure; the lack of access to imported technology and inputs for domestic production; the confiscation of land and natural resources, and the recurrent infrastructure destruction during military operations.
7. More worrisome are the challenges posed to human capital formation. The closure of schools and lack of reliable Internet networks, leave children and young people without opportunities.
8. Moreover, the expansion of settlements and the dispossession related, apart of being violations of international law, hinder development possibilities and pre-empt a meaningful, sustainable solution for the region, according with UN resolutions.

9. GRULAC recognizes the work UNCTAD has done to provide data driven analysis on the economic and social situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and acknowledges the advisory services it provides to the Palestinian government,

10. The Group calls UNCTAD and member States to provide sufficient additional regular and extra-budgetary resources to enable UNCTAD Program of Assistance to the Palestinian People to implement the mandate extended by the Nairobi Maafikiano and respond to the requests made by several UN General Assembly resolutions and to continue the provision of its valuable expertise, technical cooperation projects, research, and advisory services in favour of the Palestinian people.

**Finally, Madam President,**

11. GRULAC expresses solidarity with the Palestinian people amid this protracted pandemic, and these difficult and highly uncertain times. We support their peaceful efforts for establishing their independent and peaceful State, in line with the consensus of the international community and numerous UN resolutions.

Thank you.