



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة لدولة فلسطين لدى الأمم المتحدة
Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

7 February 2014 (As Delivered)

Statement by Mr. Yousef Zeidan, Legal Adviser, before the Eight Open Working Group on SDGs

Thank you Co-Chair, at the outset, on behalf of the State of Palestine, I express our full appreciation to you and your Co-Chair.

Mr. Co-Chair,

The State of Palestine aligns itself with the Statement made by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Co-Chair,

As the international community once again comes together to formulate development targets and goals, the State of Palestine remains under foreign military occupation which obstructs every aspect of life and development. This cluster on conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding and promotion of durable peace, rule of law and governance is existential for the State of Palestine as we seek the end of the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 in order to achieve our full potential and live in peace and dignity in our own prosperous, contiguous and secure State.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Foreign occupation and sustainable development are two mutually exclusive concepts. They are totally incompatible. The foreign occupation of our land has severely limited prospects for development and deprived our peoples of their basic human rights. It is a situation that threatens international peace and security and has taken the region and the international community further away from peaceful coexistence.

The State of Palestine's pursuit of sustainable development encompasses the three pillars of sustainable development, namely social, economy and environment, the foundation of all of which is the rule of law, where Palestine and its people are no longer exploited for the benefit of Israel and its economy, exacerbating economic and social inequality.

In the social pillar, the Palestinian people continue to strive to achieve their basic human rights, including their right to self-determination, free from subjugation and oppression. So long as foreign occupation persists, peace will remain elusive and the State of Palestine will be deprived of the opportunity to achieve sustainable development, like all peoples around the world. While the State of Palestine is making gains on the rule of law and governance at the national level, such as improving access to justice and reforming State institutions, the rule of law at the international level continues to be trampled due to the military occupation, especially due to Israel's insatiable thirst for land confiscation and settlement construction in total violation of international humanitarian and criminal law.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Our economic development also continues to be hampered by the Israeli military occupation. The economy has remained fragile as a result of the various restrictions imposed by the occupying Power. These multiple restrictions include: the lack of control over borders and over imports and exports, limitations on production inputs, the blockade on the Gaza Strip, movement restrictions inside the West Bank, land confiscation, a stringent permit regime, and the physical destruction of Palestinian economic facilities. These restrictions have, *inter alia*, resulted in increased costs of production, transportation, imports and exports, heavily undermining the development and competitiveness of our economy. The cumulative effects of Israeli occupation policies have resulted in high poverty rates, widespread unemployment, especially in Gaza, where fishing limits are arbitrarily restricted severely intensifying the prevalent food insecurity there.

Our environmental pillar remains the weakest, as Israeli exploitation of Palestinian natural resources runs rampant, with the occupying Power controlling more than 90% of our water resources, thereby restricting agricultural and industrial development as well as access to the basic human right to water. Further, the denial of access to water resources exacerbates the progressing desertification in our semi-arid region.

Mr. Co-Chair,

The closure regime, the route of the illegal wall, the blockade on Gaza, and the denial of control over borders all contribute to the creation of fragmented Palestinian enclaves, Bantustans, lacking contiguity and economic viability. The health of our citizens is directly and adversely impacted by the Israeli nuclear waste disposed in the southern West Bank, by hazardous waste and pollution inflicted by Israeli industries located in Israeli settlements throughout the West Bank, and by untreated sewage disposed of by settlements throughout our land.

Mr. Co-Chair,

We will continue to strive for sustainable development through pursuing the independence of our people and State from the Israeli occupation. However, we reiterate once again that the State of Palestine will be deprived of the opportunity to achieve sustainable development as long as we continue to suffer under a hostile and expansionist Israeli occupation, which impacts every single aspect of Palestinian social and economic life, as well as our natural environment.

Finally, Mr. Co-Chair,

We reaffirm that in this process the international community must uphold its commitments, as expressed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the 2005 World Summit Outcome and the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals of 2010, to take further effective measures and actions, in conformity with international law, to remove the obstacles to the full realization of the right of self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, which continue to adversely affect their economic and social development as well as their environment, which are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and must be combated and eliminated as detailed in paragraph 27 of “*The Future We Want*” adopted at Rio +20.

Thank You