



INDIA भारत

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Statement

by

Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri
Permanent Representative

at the

UNITED GENERAL ASSEMBLY

on

"The situation in the Middle East"
(Agenda Item 36)

New York

November 30, 2011

Mr. President,

At the outset, please allow me to express our sincere appreciation for scheduling this discussion on an important subject that demands our collective attention - The situation in the Middle East. Today's discussions that follow the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people are timely and appropriate.

The West Asian region, a cradle of human civilization, is of importance and concern to the entire international community including India. The region is home to nearly 5 million Indians and is an important source for India's energy needs. As a nation with age-old historic and cultural ties with the Middle East, India has an abiding interest in the early resolution of all pending issues that have troubled the region since the inception of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

The situation in the region is quite different from what it was when we discussed this topic last year in the General Assembly. While the issue of Palestine has taken a decisive turn in the history after Palestine's application on 23 September 2011 full membership to the United Nations, the region is also witnessing unprecedented events. People of many countries in the region are demanding the right to shape their own future.

Speaking a day after President Abbas filed the application, my Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said in the General Assembly on 24 September 2011 that India has been steadfast in its support for the Palestinian people's struggle for a sovereign, independent, viable and united state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders side by side and at peace with Israel, as per the relevant resolutions of this Organization, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Roadmap. The Prime Minister added that we look forward to welcoming Palestine as an equal member of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

While the Council could not reach unanimity on the application of Palestine for full membership to the UN, the overwhelming vote in Paris on 31 October in favour of Palestine's membership to UNESCO demonstrated that the international community supports recognition of Palestine as an equal member of the comity of nations. We remain convinced that Palestine meets all criteria for UN membership as set out in the UN Charter and deserves to become a full-fledged member of this organization. We hope that this Council will be able to support this soon.

For peace and security on the ground, however, it is necessary that direct talks between Israel and Palestine resume without any further delay. In this regard, we are

stand ready to assist the countries in these efforts while respecting sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries.

Mr. President,

As my Prime Minister said in the General Assembly on 24 September, societies cannot be reordered from outside through military force. Observance of the rule of law is as important in international affairs as it is within countries.

In conclusion, Mr. President, India is ready to play a supportive role in this collective endeavour to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.
