

**Statement by Ambassador Abdullah Hussain Harron,**  
**Permanent Representative of Pakistan**  
**in the General Assembly on the Question of Palestine (Item-16)**  
**and the Situation in the Middle East (Item-15)**  
**(30 November 2009)**

Mr. President,

The annual debates on General Assembly's agenda items-15 and 16 are a stark reminder of the protracted suffering, desolation and dispossession of the Palestinian people and their continuing ordeal and oppression under occupation. Each year, the overarching theme of the statements by the Member States is the desire for lasting peace in the region. Such a peace has eluded us so far.

A viable platform for our common pursuit of peace in the Middle East and the cause of Palestine is the 'Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People'. We greatly value its work under able leadership of the Permanent Representative of Senegal. We also thank its *Rapporteur*, the Permanent Representative of Malta for his invaluable contributions.

Today's important debate coincides with observance of International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. It is, therefore, a propitious occasion to reaffirm our commitment to legitimate struggle of the Palestinian People for their inalienable rights.

Mr. President,

For the last six decades, peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine has remained one of the major challenges for the international community. We are now entering the seventh decade of our collective failure to meet this challenge. Regrettably, a breakthrough is still not in sight. On one hand, prospects of the final peace treaty envisioned from Oslo in 1993 to Annapolis in 2007 are not encouraging. On the other hand, serious deterioration of living conditions in the Occupied Territories is seeing no reversal. Israeli impunity and defiance of international community is inflicting a mortal blow both to the peace process and living conditions of the people under its illegal occupation.

From amongst these trends, worsening humanitarian situation in the occupied territories is a matter of serious concern for my delegation. As acknowledged by various UN reports, closure of Gaza's borders to free flow of people and commerce is strangulating local economy, public services and human security. Construction of the illegal separation wall replicates this situation in the West Bank.

Elsewhere in Occupied territories, settlement activity by Israel is also compounding the conflict. We have noted with great concern a finding that 755 square meters of territory was added to total area of Israeli settlement in the West Bank alone from August 2008 to July 2009. The settlement in and around East Jerusalem and occupied Syrian Golan; together with illegal excavation around holy sites for Muslims and Christians are only widening the dimensions of the conflict. The construction of 900 housing units in "Gillo" settlement south of East Jerusalem has the potential to further ignite the prevailing tensions in the region.

The incessant culture of impunity shown by Israel vitiates trust and confidence, which is an essential pre-requisite of a viable peace process. Confidence cannot be built in the face of actions

involving use of force, human rights violations, discrimination, checkpoints and permits, and blockades of entire populations resulting in social and economic strangulation and collective punishment of the Palestinian people. Israel has to seriously reconsider its violent actions and harsh measures not just for the besieged Palestinian people and the peace process, but also for its own security concerns.

**Mr. President,**

*[He added: & for the peace of the world that it antagonizes in utter disdain of humanity]*

While we see a little optimism for a sustainable peace process in the near future, complete desolation and hopelessness must be avoided. It is our hope that parties concerned will undertake immediate and credible confidence building measures, aimed at improving the overall environment conducive for the negotiations process. For this, it is imperative for the International Community to reengage itself with the issue and to revive the momentum for a renewed peace process. During the Security Council's debate on 14 October, I had outlined four parameters for such a reengagement:

- i. Firstly, the Security Council should take a lead in the International Community's reengagement. Its Member States must show the political will to achieve real progress for peace and security in the Middle East, based on relevant resolutions of the Security Council as well as the Madrid terms of reference, the road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the understandings reached in Annapolis in 2007.
- ii. Secondly, the Middle East Quartet must utilize the full potential of its statement of 24 September 2009 in support of the peace process through a transparent and objective engagement.
- iii. Thirdly, there is a pressing urgency to address the humanitarian plight in the Palestinian territories and to rebuild the Palestinian institutions battered by conflict and violence. Likewise, we must support the efforts to achieve further cohesion among the Palestinian people.
- iv. And lastly, to achieve a lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is imperative to address its root cause, i.e. the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories. The solution, therefore, requires Israel's complete withdrawal from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and all other occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan and in South Lebanon. Israel should also immediately cease all settlement activities. Also crucial to this equation would be parallel progress on the Syria-Israel and Lebanon-Israel tracks in order to achieve comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

**Mr. President,**

The people of all races and religions in the Middle East have suffered for too long. In the last sixty years, two generations have completed their respective life cycles in shadows of poverty, violence and insecurity. Only our firm resolve and concerted action and above all political will to build lasting peace can save succeeding generations of the region from tragedies and tribulations of their ill-fated predecessors.

Thank you.