

# ISRAEL

64<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**Statement by  
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Second Committee  
Agenda Item 40

“Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the  
Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,  
and of the Arab population in the occupied  
Syrian Golan over their natural resources”

United Nations, New York  
27 October 2009

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Mr. Chairman,

As in past years, Israel is disappointed that the valuable time of the Second Committee is being diverted to this agenda item which bears no relation to the important matters that genuinely form the substantive agenda of the Committee. The fact that the current agenda item is the only one on the Committee's program of work which addresses a particular country and group should give pause to anyone sincerely concerned with the question of natural resource use.

Israel and the Palestinians, as neighbors, share common interests with respect to the utilization and safeguarding of natural resources in our region. Perhaps more than in any other field, our joint interest dictates close coordination and cooperation. Under the Oslo Accords, fruitful and intensive bilateral cooperation was indeed initiated on such matters. In fact, numerous agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority have already conferred jurisdiction over many natural resources to the Palestinians. It is therefore troubling that neither this debate nor the draft resolution make any mention of this simple fact.

Among the numerous joint Israeli-Palestinian committees which regularly convene is the Joint Water Committee headed by senior water-management officials from Israel and the Palestinian Authority. This Committee, which includes sub-committees on sewage, pricing, hydrology and water-works, held several meetings in 2008 and has already met three times in 2009, most recently this past August. Such meetings are remarkably fruitful, producing such achievements as a rapid clearance mechanism for humanitarian projects, and approval for numerous sewage-treatment plants throughout the West Bank.

Related fields of Israeli-Palestinian cooperation include coordination in the establishment of energy infrastructure and joint agricultural projects advanced through Israel's international development organization, MASHAV. This variegated array of fruitful Israeli-Palestinian cooperation in natural-resource related matters belies the impressions conveyed by the draft resolution as to Israel's conduct vis à vis the subject at hand. To any fair-minded reader, the latter is clearly little more than a thinly veiled political diatribe against Israel. The cooperative reality serves as an important and ever-welcome reminder that what really counts are positive developments on the ground and not political campaigns disguised as professional debates.

Mr. Chairman,

Rather than reflecting the realities on the ground, this draft resolution and debate demonstrate a reflexive, predictable group dynamics that is unfortunate in a professional committee such as this one.

The continuous inclusion on the Second Committee's agenda of an item that singles out only one country, Israel, for discriminatory treatment, does a disservice to the many issues genuinely worthy of the Committee's attention. Moreover, it does a disservice to the cause of peace. Tendentious terminology, distorted information and a cynical manipulation of a professional body's agenda for overtly political motives are no substitute for a process based upon genuine bilateral dialogue.

We can only hope that this practice will cease in the future so that the important work of the Second Committee will not be disrupted by politicization.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.