65th General Assembly

Statement by Egyptian Representative

Question of Palestine

November 30, 2010

EGYPT: Mr. President, thank you. I have the pleasure to address the General Assembly today on behalf of the 118 states members of the nonaligned movement on agenda item 37, question of Palestine. On this important day that coincides with the international day of solidarity with the Palestinian people, presenting together an opportunity to solidify the international community's resolve to achieve the legitimate inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost of which is their right to establish the independent, sovereign and viable state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on the two-state solution, relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab peace initiative.

Unfortunately, our meeting today also comes at a time where Israel continues to carry out its illegal actions in the occupied Palestinian territory including East Jerusalem, seriously aggravating the situation on the ground and undermining the efforts to revive the political process towards a final solution of this conflict. Despite all serious efforts exerted by concerned international and regional parties to allow for the continuity of an effective, direct negotiations on the Palestinian tract towards achieving just and comprehensive solution on all core final status issues, progress continues to be obstructed by Israel's negative positions and uncalled for actions.

The nonaligned movement condemns the persistence of Israel to continue the construction and expansion process in many settlements in the West Bank, which is most intense and in and around East Jerusalem. The occupying power's blatant contempt of the unanimous position of the international community and its absolute disrespect of its obligations under international law, international humanitarian law has been more evident than ever since expiration of the date of the so-called partial moratorium on settlement activities.

It is widely known that such illegal colonization activities are causing great damage through contiguity and integrity of the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem and grave damage to the prospects for physically realizing the two-state solution.

The nonaligned movement is also alarmed by the continuous and persistent attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians, Islamic and Christian and holy sites and worship places, uprooting thousands of olive trees, vandalism and theft of agricultural equipment and crops, under the protection of Israeli forces.

Moreover, the NAM remains deeply concerned about Israel's practice of certifying and labeling products originating in Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory as being "made in Israel," in a direct violation of international law, international trade laws and all other regulations regarding the rules of origin of different commodities.

Therefore, the movement calls upon the international community and member states to take necessary measures to verify the origin of Israeli products, including enabling customs officials to travel to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory to ensure that entry of settlement products into their market is brought to a swift and resolute end, thus bringing a halt to the subsidizing of this illegal colonization enterprise.

Further, the NAM demands that Israel lifts all checkpoints and roadblocks throughout the occupied Palestinian territory. These measures continue to restrict the movement of persons and goods, seriously fragmenting the Palestinian territory and attempting to isolate East Jerusalem from its natural Arab surroundings in the West Bank. In this regard, the NAM also demands that Israel comply fully with the ICJ advisory opinion and cease its construction of its annexation wall, which is severely impacting the human rights of the Palestinian people and worsening the humanitarian conditions, in addition to its great impact on the contiguity of the Palestinian territory.

NAM also expressed deep concern regarding the serious and tense situation in occupied East Jerusalem as a result of ongoing settlement activities and other illegal measures. NAM demands the immediate cessation of all demolitions and the revocation of residency rights of yet more Palestinians, particularly those from Jerusalem, including elected Palestinian Legislative Council representatives. Those illegal actions represent clear attempts to prejudge the outcome of the future permanent status negotiations and must be rejected.

The nonaligned movement reiterates its goal for the international community to be resolute in demanding that Israel, the occupying power, abide forthwith by its legal obligations under the fourth Geneva Convention, relevant United Nations' resolutions and the roadmap.

Israel must cease all colonization practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. This means completely freezing all settlement and wall construction and other related measures, including in East Jerusalem. Israel cannot continue to ignore and defy the international consensus in this regard, including calls from the United Nations, United States, the European Union, the quartet and other international bodies without consequences. This main obstacle on the path of peace must be removed.

Mr. President, the nonaligned movement is equally disturbed over many United Nations' and independent reports regarding human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly their conclusion that a culture of impunity reigns, assisting in the repetition of the illegal violations that infringed on the wide scope of rights, including inter alia the right to self determination, the right to freedom of movement and the right to life.

The movement strongly condemns the continued imprisonment of nearly 10,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails and other detention facilities, where mistreatment and torture is widely used. It is NAM's conviction that those prisoners, who include children and women, would be immediately released and proper international inspection of their current condition should be a priority for the United Nations and the international community.

The movement also remains gravely concerned by the situation in the Gaza Strip, which remains a top priority for NAM. The continued imposition of collective punishment by Israel on the entire Palestinian civilian population has created a critical human rights and humanitarian situation there. The population continues to suffer and endure serious hardships as a result of the ongoing Israeli blockade and impact of the brutal military aggression of 2008/2009.

In this regard, the NAM demands that Israel completely lift its illegal blockade and fully implement Security Council resolution 1860 of 2009, General Assembly resolution of the special session number 10/18 and all other relevant United Nations' resolutions and respect its obligations in this regard under international humanitarian law.

Israel must open all its crossing points with Gaza for the sustained and regular movement of persons and goods. The movement also stresses the urgency of the reconstruction of Gaza and demands that Israel enables reconstruction and economic revival by allowing the import of the reconstruction materials, including those necessary for reconstruction of United Nations' facilities and UNRWA schools.

Mr. President, while the Palestinian Authority has repeatedly affirmed its determination to pursue the path of peace and undertake all measures to ensure security, Israel continues to violate its legal obligations and blatantly impede efforts to resume direct negotiations through a series of unlawful, provocative measures that only inflame the situation, including repeating inflammatory remarks by government officials and the racist bill recently passed by the Israeli cabinet on the Jewish Loyalty Oath, in clear violation of the legal and religious freedoms of the Arab population in Israel.

Moreover, the passage of the last bill by the Israeli Parliament set stringent new conditions before any withdrawal from the occupied Arab territory illegally annexed by Israel, yet again contradicts and grossly violates its obligation under international law. Despite preaching about peace, Israel continues to send clear, negative messages to the world about its intentions to continue its occupation of the Arab lands occupied in 1967 and entrenching all obstacles that would prevent withdrawal and thus prevent reaching peace in the Middle East.

The nonaligned movement stresses that serious and genuine negotiations cannot be conducted while Israel continues to carry out its illegal actions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly its settlement activities.

We reiterate our demand to Israel to promote an environment conducive for peace, including by refraining from provocations and actions aiming at altering the status of the occupied Palestinian territory in the West Bank and particularly East Jerusalem, and prejudging the outcome of the final status negotiations and to constructively engage with international efforts to ensure the resumption of negotiations and the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution of the conflict in the Middle East.

Mr. President, the international community must act to prevent the total demise of direct negotiations on the Palestinian tract. The nonaligned movement stresses the need for the international community to remain united in its demand that Israel respects its legal obligations as an occupying power and ceases forthwith its violations. Accountability at this stage is imperative and the international community must not waiver in its demands.

This is in the interest of both the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples, the Middle East region as a whole and beyond. Indeed, such respect is imperative for achieving the two-state solution based on agreed terms of reference, namely Security Council resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1515 and 1850, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab peace initiative and the roadmap, which would enable us to realize a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab/Israeli conflict.

The nonaligned movement reaffirms its unwavering commitment to a just and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine and to the immediate restoration of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people, including to exercise self determination and sovereignty in their independent, viable state of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. Thank you Mr. President.

CHAIRMAN: I thank the permanent representative of Egypt. Before proceeding, I would like to inform members that the consideration of agenda item 32, that is the role of diamonds in fueling conflict, scheduled for Thursday 2, December, 2010 has been postponed to a later date to be announced later on.

I now give the floor to the permanent represent of Belgium to speak on behalf of the European Union.