

*Permanent Observer Mission
of Palestine
to the United Nations*



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة
لفلسطين
لدى الأمم المتحدة

Statement by Mr. Yussef F. Kanaan, Senior Adviser of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, United Nations Committee on Information, 30 April 2008:

Mr.Chairman,

Allow me at the outset to extend, on behalf of the delegation of Palestine, our sincere congratulations on your assumption of the Chair of the Committee on Information and also to the distinguished members of the Bureau. We are fully confident that you will steer the Committee ably and efficiently. We also express our thanks and appreciation to the UN Secretary-General for his reports on the activities of the Department of Public Information and to the Committee for its comprehensive and valuable report and for its efforts in this regard. We also extend our deep thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Kiyo Akasaka, Under-Secretary General for Public Information and Communications, for his outstanding leadership of the Department and for the important statement he made. We commend all the staff and officers of the Department for their valuable efforts in carrying out their tasks

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished delegate of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and with the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic on behalf of the Arab Group. We also extend our congratulations to the delegations of Antigua and Barbuda and Zambia for their accession to membership of the Committee on Information.

Mr.Chairman,

My delegation underlines the importance of the Special Information Programme undertaken by the Department of Public Information on the Question of Palestine based on the historical and permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects, and in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions. The latest such resolution is resolution 62/82, which was adopted by an overwhelming majority, reflecting international support for this Programme and emphasizing its importance and its enormous benefits in raising the international community's awareness of the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, as well as its effective contribution to the creation of an environment conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination and establish their independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. I must express our deep appreciation to the Member States of the United Nations for their support of this Programme.

We highly value and deeply appreciate the work of the Department of Public Information in this regard, especially the Section of Palestine, which plays an important and vital role, including the organization of annual international media seminars on the Palestinian question and the situation in the Middle East, such as the fifteenth seminar held in Tokyo last year in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan under the theme “Restoring peace: re-engaging Israelis and Palestinians in the search for a comprehensive and lasting political settlement”. We look forward to the media seminar to be held this year. We hope that the Department will continue its activities in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation attaches much importance to the continuation of the Department of Public Information in providing assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development through the training programme for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists. Undoubtedly, their participation in this programme is of particular importance despite the obstacles set by the Israeli occupation authorities through the severe restrictions imposed on the Palestinians and the harsh siege imposed on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially on the Gaza Strip. At a time when we talk about the importance of the role of media in promoting dialogue between Palestinian and Israeli sides and at a time when international efforts are being exerted to revive the peace process in order to achieve a just and peaceful settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Israel continues its illegal and inhumane practices and actions against the Palestinian people. Israel had prevented Palestinian journalists from leaving the Occupied Palestinian Territory to participate in the training programme last year. In this regard, it is incumbent upon the international community to call upon Israel to cease such practices to enable Palestinian journalists to benefit from such programmes.

Mr. Chairman,

Israeli occupying forces have continued to target journalists working to convey the reality and truth about Israeli practices on the ground. On 16 April, Israeli occupying forces killed 23-year-old Palestinian journalist Fadl Shanaa, a cameraman working for Reuters News Agency, as he was carrying his professional duty and covering the Israeli military operations against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. It is worth noting that the car in which Shanaa was riding had the press badge showing clearly and in more than one place, and he was wearing a shield also clearly bearing the press badge. The killing of Shanaa brings to (10) the number of journalists killed by the Israeli occupying forces since September 2000. The Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Matsuura, has condemned the killing of Shanaa stressing that due regard be paid to the safety of journalists at all times and under all circumstances. He also called for investigation into the circumstances surrounding the attack on Shanaa's vehicle. The killing of Shanaa took place as we were talking about World Press Freedom Day and the slogan of security and safety of journalist.

My delegation also wishes to refer to the aforementioned General Assembly resolution with regard to the organization and promotion of fact-finding news missions for journalists to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Israel continues to refuse to comply with this resolution like all other relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, and it must be called upon to comply with this resolution so that the facts on the ground can be revealed.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to emphasize the importance of the Department of Public Information's work, especially the section on Palestine, to develop the archives of films and videotape documentaries on the history of the Palestinian question using the method of "digitalization" because of their historical and documentary importance to allow researchers and educational institutions and others to benefit from such materials and document. We hope that the Department of Public Information will give this matter special attention .We commend the DPI for its efforts to include the permanent exhibition on Palestine in the guided tours for visitors to the headquarters of the United Nations to cover all aspects of the Palestinian question .We would like also to refer to the booklet entitled "*The Question of Palestine and the United Nations*", which we learned has been updated and completed and we hope it will be available to the Member States and to the public next month to coincide with the sixtieth anniversary of the Palestinian Al-Nakba (Catastrophe) of 1948.

Mr.Chairman,

We believe that the Department of Public Information should pay more attention to the question of dialogue among civilizations to avert the dangers of hatred, intolerance, racism and xenophobia, and what is happening, regrettably, in some countries of deplorable instances of defamation of the religion of Islam accentuates the need for exerting greater efforts in this regard .In this connection, we recall General Assembly resolution 60/4 entitled "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations", which emphasizes the DPI's important role in formulating ways and means to promote and facilitate dialogue among civilizations in United Nations activities and in various areas .

Mr.Chairman,

Our Palestinian people have suffered and are still suffering from their continued deprivation to catch up with technological development because of the continuing Israeli occupation, which covers land and air through the occupation and the continued control of the frequency spectrum of Palestine and puts obstacles and impediments to growth and development of this sector, depriving our people of the right of direct access to telecommunications services and information technology. Achieving development and advancing on the path of knowledge cannot be realized without an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Syrian Golan and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, so that a lasting, just and comprehensive peace can be achieved, a peace that guarantees security and stability of all peoples in the region .

In conclusion, we reiterate what we have previously stated in stressing the key role that the Member States in the international organization - and we hope Palestine will join them in the near future - can play in making the Department of Public Information the true public voice of the United Nations.

Thank you, Mr .Chairman.