

17 November 2006

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at the 28th Plenary Meeting – 10th Emergency Special Session of the
General Assembly**

We are meeting today because of the deteriorating situation in the Middle East, which requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region. The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories is deteriorating daily, creating serious humanitarian problems and further exacerbating already serious political problems. The severe economic crisis endured by Palestinian society is growing worse, which in turns increases the complexity of the situation.

Consequently, we must condemn the killing of Palestinian and Israeli civilians, without distinction, because such arbitrary killings are contrary to the rules of international humanitarian law and to established legal norms. Here, we should recall that this dramatic escalation of violence and counter-violence has disastrous consequences and a negative impact on Palestinian and Israeli societies alike. It widens the gap between these two peoples, who live side by side.

We therefore consider that the only solution lies in a return to the negotiating table, for dialogue provides the only means of serving the interests of both parties in order to achieve the just peace that we all expect. It is not only the two parties to the conflict that must return to the negotiating table; they must be accompanied by the international community, because the outcome will have an impact beyond the geographical boundaries of the area of conflict. This situation calls for initiatives and solutions aimed at finding a genuine resolution of the crisis, beginning with an end to the cycle of violence. In the absence of effective solutions, that cycle of violence will continue.

The international community now knows that negotiations will result in a just, comprehensive and lasting peace only if there is a serious plan that can meet the interests of both parties to the conflict and whose goal is a genuine peace based on respect for the rights of both peoples. The time has come for an end to the bleeding that has continued for decades in one of the tensest regions of the world. We all must meet the serious challenge we are facing at this historic and critical stage.

We should work towards ensuring the success of the peace process between the Palestinian and Israeli parties, on the basis of the establishment of two States living side by side in security and stability. That will open the way to peace throughout the Middle East region and will mark the beginning of a new life for the peoples of the region and for succeeding generations - generations in which a struggle based on force and violence will be replaced by another kind of struggle: a struggle towards security, prosperity and progress.