

29 November 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
on the General Assembly Item 37 “Question of Palestine”**

His Excellency Mr. Abdou Salam Diallo, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people,
His Excellency Mr. Saviour Borg, Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people,
Distinguished delegates,

Our meeting today on the question of Palestine is of crucial importance.

The issue of Palestine has been particularly central during this session of the General Assembly.

We witnessed an historic development here in New York when the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, transmitted Palestine’s application for Membership to the United Nations to the Secretary-General on the 23rd of September.

Mr. Abbas announced this initiative to the world here, in front of the General Assembly.

On my part, and within the framework of my mandate, I circulated this request to all the Members States of the United Nations.

Other developments have taken place since then.

The Security Council Committee on the Admission of New Members examined the Palestinian application.

A widely-commended exchange of prisoners successfully took place.

The Quartet reinvigorated its efforts to re-launch the negotiations.

Today, on November 29th, we observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

We commemorate this day in 1947, on which the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), dividing the territory known as “mandatory Palestine” into two States; one Jewish, one Arab.

This morning, in front of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I recalled the sustained and resolute commitment of the United Nations General Assembly to the Palestinian people, to the peoples of the region and to the peace process.

This year, and today in particular, the General Assembly has a special responsibility to renew and reaffirm its commitment to finding a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

It is my conviction that the General Assembly has a role to play.

We should continue to work collectively for the attainment of a just and comprehensive negotiated peace settlement in the Middle East. A peace settlement that results in two viable, sovereign and independent States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized pre-1967 borders.

Therefore, we should all work together to be able to receive, as soon as possible, Palestine as a new member of our organization. I will not spare any effort in this direction.

In the short term, we must take steps to alleviate the daily suffering of the Palestinian people.

The humanitarian situation on the ground is a source of great concern.

I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Relief and Works agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), as well as non-governmental organizations and civil society at large, who have played a critical role in alleviating the suffering of the growing Palestinian refugee population. They have done so under extreme political and financial conditions.

I would urge all Member states to solidify their valuable contributions to the work of UNRWA.

Thank you.