

Right of Reply: Statement by Mr. Yussef Kanaan, Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations (2 May 2007)

I wish to reply in brief to the comments made today by the Israeli representative regarding the United Nations Department of Public Information's Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine. Regrettably, we have heard many such arguments from Israel against United Nations programmes for Palestine, usually based on accusations of partiality or waste of resources that are unfounded.

The DPI Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine is in actuality a useful programme that serves to raise awareness in the international community with regard to the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, issues of high importance on the agenda of the United Nations and indeed for the international community. Among its activities, the Programme disseminates information on all of the activities of the UN system relating to the question of Palestine and issues publications on different aspects of the question, including materials that cover recent developments, particularly developments regarding the efforts that continue to be exerted to achieve a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The information distributed by the Programme is factual and impartial and valuable in contributing to an atmosphere of dialogue supportive of peace efforts. The Programme also offers an annual training programme for Palestinian journalists from the Occupied Palestinian Territory to assist them in developing their media capacity and skills; an opportunity that is highly regarded and would not otherwise be available to them. All such activities are beneficial, positive, and constructive and should be supported.

In fact, the most important point I wish to make today on this subject is the fact that the General Assembly resolution mandating this DPI programme is one that has annually received the overwhelming support of the majority of Member States. This is what is important because it is the membership as a whole that decides which programmes are necessary and useful, and there is clearly near consensus the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine is one of them and should be maintained.

Moreover, such a programme is clearly in line with the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law, for, in this regard, it is incumbent on the United Nations to do its utmost to promote awareness of the question of Palestine in order to promote dialogue and understanding and thus to promote the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and peaceful settlement.