



PERMANENT
OBSERVER MISSION OF
PALESTINE
TO THE
UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by Mr. Yussef Kanaan, Senior Adviser, Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, before the Committee on Information (28 April 2011:
(please check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I wish to extend Palestine's sincere congratulations to the friendly country of Costa Rica on your assumption of the Chair of this Committee, as well as to distinguished members of the Bureau. We have full confidence in your ability to efficiently and effectively steer the Committee's work to success. We also express our appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his reports on the activities of the Department of Public Information (DPI), as well as to the Committee on Information for its thorough report and valuable efforts in this regard. We also express our thanks and appreciation to Mr. Kiyo Akasaka, Under-Secretary General for Public Information and Communications, for his outstanding leadership of the Department and his important and comprehensive statement at the outset. We also commend all DPI staff for their valuable efforts and diligent work in implementation of the Department's many important programmes, including the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine.

Before proceeding, my delegation wishes to express its support for the important statement made by the distinguished delegate of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

Based on the historical, permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects, my delegation stresses the importance of the DPI Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine, in accordance with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the latest being resolution 65/15, which was adopted on 30 November 2010 by an overwhelming majority. The adoption of these resolutions reflects the broad international support for this Programme, which is instrumental in raising and promoting the international community's awareness of the Question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, issues of high priority on the United Nations' agenda, and in raising awareness of and support for the rights of the Palestinian people as well as for the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peaceful settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid

principles, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Road Map.

My delegation highly commends the Department of Public Information, especially the Palestine Section, for carrying out a number of activities in connection with the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine, as detailed in the report of the Secretary-General (A/AC.198/2011/2), including the organization of the International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, held in Lisbon in July 2010, which focused on the important role being played by the media locally, regionally and internationally in shaping public opinion and mobilizing support for the peace process. In this connection, we reiterate our gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Portugal for hosting this important seminar. We look forward to the next seminar to be held in Budapest, Republic of Hungary, in July this year.

We also commend the DPI for its efforts with regard to the permanent exhibit on the Question of Palestine at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Office in Geneva. We also reaffirm the importance of the DPI's work in the development of the archives of films and videotape documentaries on the history of the Question of Palestine by using the method of digitalization which will be useful for the information of the general public, researchers, academic institutions and others.

Mr. Chairman,

We have drawn the attention of this distinguished Committee at its previous session on the Question of Palestine's link on the home page of the United Nations which was distinctive, but, regrettably, after the re-design of this page the link on the Question of Palestine is no longer there or on the news pages and instead it has been replaced by the name of the situation in the Middle East. We have also raised this issue before the Fourth Committee under the item "Questions relating to information." While we stress the importance of the DPI Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine, we reiterate our call on the Department to consider pursuing the issue of re-linking the Question of Palestine on the web page of the United Nations.

As we have stated before, that while we fully understand the wide range of human rights-related issues, that the Palestine, Decolonization and Human Rights Section will now be responsible for, we underline that this should not interfere with the effective manner in which issues related to the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine are carried out. Up until now, the mandate of the Programme has not been fully implemented, including, for example, the request by the General Assembly for the DPI to organize and promote fact-finding news missions for journalists to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel and to expand its collection of audio-visual materials on the Question of Palestine. Hence, we strongly hope that the increase in the Section's responsibilities will not affect the full implementation of its mandate vis-à-vis the Question of Palestine, and that it will receive sufficient funding and staff to enable fulfillment of its tasks in this regard

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation attaches much importance to the DPI's continued provision of assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development through the annual training programme for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists from the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This training contributes to strengthening the media skills and abilities of those practitioners privileged to be selected, despite the obstacles imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, through its severe restrictions placed on the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and in particular the unjust and inhumane siege on the Gaza Strip. Regrettably, at a time when all speak of the importance of the role of media in promoting dialogue between Palestinian and Israeli sides, Israel continues its illegal and inhumane practices against the Palestinian people, obstructing daily life and innumerable opportunities for the Palestinian people to develop and progress, including via such important training programmes.

Mr. Chairman,

The Israeli occupying forces continue to systematically and deliberately target journalists working tirelessly to convey the grim daily reality and truth about Israel's illegal, aggressive and destructive policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. For example, many Palestinian and foreign journalists and photographers, who cover peaceful, non-violent protests and demonstrations in Palestinian cities and villages, especially in the villages of Bil'in and Ni'lin, against Israel's construction of its illegal annexation Wall and settlements, are subjected to attacks and arrests by the Israeli occupying forces, as well to acts of violence by illegal Israeli settlers.

In this regard, we wish to highlight the irony of Israel's false claim of democracy as it openly and officially practices censorship to hide the illegal actions it systematically perpetrates against the Palestinian people under its occupation. We reiterate our call to this Committee and relevant international organizations to step up their efforts to protect the Palestinian and foreign journalists and ensure that they can work without the repressive limitations of censorship and the threat and danger of military force against them. We stress that Israel should be held accountable for all the crimes it has committed against the Palestinian people, including journalists and media personnel.

Mr. Chairman,

Information technology and telecommunications provide great opportunity for the Palestinian people who have suffered long years of deprivation from catching up with the communications revolution and information technology, which is one of the main pillars of achieving social and economic development. The Palestinian National Authority, through the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology, attaches great importance to the strategic role of this sector and its development in spite of Israeli control over all aspects of Palestinian life and the continued restrictions

imposed on the telecommunications sector in Palestine, including the Palestinian frequency spectrum. We call upon the international community to support Palestine's full rights to direct accessibility to telecommunications services and information technology, and immediate cessation by Israel of its unlawful control of the Palestinian frequency spectrum to enable the Palestinian leadership to build the telecommunications and information technology networks to reach our people everywhere in Palestine and to help us overcome the geographical and physical impediments to all forms of normal life and development caused by the illegal settlements, the apartheid annexation Wall and the suffocating siege of the Gaza Strip.

The development of the telecommunications and information technology sector is an integral part of the plan to build institutions of the State of Palestine being implemented by the Government of Dr. Salam Fayyad. This plan is rapidly advancing to completion by August 2011 with the only obstacle to the full realization of its objectives being the ongoing Israeli occupation

Mr. Chairman,

Despite Israel's continued and deliberate attempts, through its illegal policies and practices against the Palestinian people, to undermine international and regional efforts to revive the peace process, we believe that the DPI Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine is instrumental in contributing to the creation of an environment conducive for dialogue and understanding and supportive to the peace process aimed at ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories that began in 1967, and enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and achieve independence of their State of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. Achieving this objective will pave the way towards the admission of the State of Palestine as a full member of the United Nations to take its rightful place among the community of nations with pride and dignity. This is the only way to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, which guarantees to all peoples in the region security, stability and opportunities for development and prosperity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.