

**REMARKS BY H.E. TIJJANI MUHAMMAD-BANDE,
PRESIDENT OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT THE
SPECIAL MEETING IN OBSERVANCE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, 27TH NOVEMBER 2019**

I thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for organizing this event to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. This Day, which is observed by the United Nations each year, as mandated by General Assembly resolutions 32/40 B of 2nd December 1977, 34/65 D of 12th December 1979, and other resolutions adopted under agenda item “Question of Palestine”, reminds us that we have a collective task of resolving the lingering Palestinian issue. This is important, given that for over seven decades the question of Palestine has remained unresolved, it is civilians who suffer most from the violence, killings, incitements, demolitions, illegal settlement activities, and so on.

This meeting holds amidst the deteriorating political and security situation that continues to destabilize the Middle East. This is no doubt fueled among other things, by ignoring the fact that Arab or Jewish, we are one, and our destinies are intricately linked. In true solidarity with the Palestinians, we must all pull together to

implement the various resolutions on the Palestinian question. Whatever leanings delegations are, we must work with utmost sense of justice and faith in this matter.

The comity of nations must show good faith in mediating a mutually agreeable outcome for both parties.

Accordingly, we must focus on how best to de-escalate, and ensure a comprehensive and just peace. This is only possible if actors, particularly leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, in accordance with resolution 181, work in concert for the establishment of two states - Israel and Palestine - living side-by-side and within secure and recognized borders based on the 1967 lines.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

In our quest for peace, we must begin on the premise that a peaceful solution to the Israel - Palestine conflict cannot come from unilateral decisions that are contrary to long agreed positions on the matter. It must also be clear that there must be a cessation of all forms of violence, from whatever source, as any loss of human life, be it Palestinian or Israeli, is unacceptable. All legitimate grievances must be solved amicably, with leaders working to prevent violent actions.

Excellencies

There is no doubt that the Palestinian people face extremely complex humanitarian conditions, with 43 per cent of the population being refugees. Most citizens of Palestine have grown up in this untenable situation. The population in Gaza continues to endure extremely difficult living conditions and human rights violation. This must stop, as children and women are among the many casualties of these actions. Their need for food, water, energy, healthcare, education and the creation of decent jobs, is exacerbated by the need to repair and rebuild, as a result of recurring clashes, as well as insufficient resources and the decline in financial aid. We must act, to ensure that the critical humanitarian and socio-economic situation does not continue to fuel anger and despair among the people, thereby provoking further rounds of escalation and violence.

This must be tackled by strengthening UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to ensure that it can meet the humanitarian needs of over 5.4 million Palestinian refugees. It is important that we collectively safeguard the Agency against the political and financial challenges it faces.

Today, as we reaffirm our support for the Palestinian people, it is important not to lose faith that we could make significant progress,

making the extension of UNRWA mandate unnecessary. I encourage all parties to re-engage in dialogue on the basis of relevant UN resolutions, the Madrid Principles, the Quartet Roadmap, the Arab Peace Initiative among others.

We stand in solidarity with the Palestinians and with all peoples who are not treated with justice.

I thank you.