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special economic assistance**

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agencies and the international institutions
associated with the United Nations**

Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [74/117](#), contains an assessment of the assistance received by the Palestinian people and proposals for responding to unmet needs. It provides a description of the efforts made by the United Nations, in cooperation with the Government of Palestine, donors and civil society, to support Palestinian people and institutions.

The reporting period (1 April 2019–31 March 2020) was characterized by continued tensions and violence and the persistence of negative trends, further impeding the resumption of meaningful negotiations and affecting prospects for peace. The fiscal performance of the Palestinian Authority was adversely affected by a dispute over the withholding by Israel of tax revenues owed to the Palestinian Authority and the decline of overseas development assistance, leaving significant unmet needs. The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was further compounded by the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in March 2020.

During the reporting period, the United Nations continued to coordinate and deliver humanitarian and development assistance to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Some of that assistance targeted Palestinian individuals and communities in areas beyond the reach of the Palestinian Authority, including East Jerusalem and Area C, in the occupied West Bank, and Gaza.

Under the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, \$348 million is sought to provide basic food, protection, health care, shelter, water and sanitation to 1.5 million Palestinians who have been identified as those most in need of humanitarian interventions across the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

* [A/75/50](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 74/117, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its seventy-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of the resolution, containing an assessment of the assistance actually received by the Palestinian people, an assessment of the needs still unmet and specific proposals for responding effectively to them. The reporting period is from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

2. Information on the political and socioeconomic situation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory is provided in several periodic reports prepared by United Nations entities and submitted to various United Nations bodies, including the monthly Security Council briefings by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process; the report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan; the annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); and the biannual reports of the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians.

3. The humanitarian, economic and development needs of the Palestinian people are reflected in several complementary strategic and resource mobilization documents. Under the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, \$348 million is sought to provide basic food, protection, health care, shelter, water and sanitation to 1.5 million Palestinians who have been identified as those most in need of support across the Occupied Palestinian Territory. That is comparable to the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan (\$350 million), but significantly lower than the amount sought for 2018 (\$539.7 million). The decrease does not reflect a reduction in the level of need; rather, it is an acknowledgement of continuing underfunding for humanitarian operations throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory: 73 per cent of the requested funding for the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan was secured. That means that nearly one million Palestinians in need of humanitarian assistance, mainly in the Gaza Strip, will not receive any assistance through the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan, even if it is fully funded.

4. The global outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is likely to exacerbate existing humanitarian needs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and reverse development gains, with far-reaching socioeconomic consequences.

5. The inter-agency COVID-19 response plan for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, released in April 2020, calls for \$41.9 million to respond to the public health needs and immediate humanitarian consequences of the pandemic. During the reporting period, the humanitarian country team, led by the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, commenced implementation of the plan, in support of the Government's efforts to prevent further transmission of the disease in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, provide adequate care for patients and their families, and mitigate the worst effects of the pandemic. At the same time, preparations also commenced for a broader socioeconomic recovery plan of the United Nations in support of the Government of Palestine.

6. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2018–2022 presents the United Nations strategic response to Palestinian development priorities contained in the Palestinian National Policy Agenda for 2017–2022. The Framework

places the Palestinian people at the centre of development programming, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and requires financial resources of approximately \$1.26 billion over five years.

7. Throughout the reporting period, the Office of the Special Coordinator continued its efforts to support conflict prevention and a return to peace negotiations, and to promote coordination among the Government of Palestine, the United Nations, the international community and the Government of Israel.

II. Overview of the current situation

A. Political context

8. The overall situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to be characterized by continued tensions and violence and the persistence of negative trends, further impeding the resumption of meaningful negotiations and affecting prospects for peace. In addition, the prospect of the annexation by Israel of parts of the occupied West Bank is a growing threat. Such steps, if implemented, would not only constitute a serious violation of international law, but they would also effectively end the prospect of the two-State solution and close the door to negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

9. In March 2020, COVID-19 began to spread in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Since the start of the outbreak, both the Palestinian Authority and Israel have coordinated and taken far-reaching measures to try to contain the disease. Technical cooperation between the parties has been effective, including with regard to the movement and provision of medical goods. However, areas of tension remain, including in East Jerusalem and Hebron, that could undermine efforts to combat the spread of the disease.

10. On 28 January, the United States of America presented its “Peace to Prosperity” vision for peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Senior Israeli officials welcomed the United States vision. The Palestinian leadership rejected it, instead calling on the international community to establish a multilateral framework to advance the peace process based on international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. Palestinian officials stated that any Israeli move to annex parts of the occupied West Bank would cancel all signed bilateral agreements and lead to regional turmoil. The League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation also rejected the United States vision, while the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy noted that the proposal departed from “internationally agreed parameters”. The United Nations position on the issue is defined by relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements. The United Nations remains committed to resolving the conflict on these bases and realizing the vision of two States – Israel and Palestine – living side by side in peace and security on the basis of pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

11. In Gaza, the dire humanitarian, economic and political situation persists, exacerbated by the absence of a political horizon, division among Palestinian factions and the severe movement and access restrictions imposed by Israel. Against that backdrop, protests at the Gaza perimeter fence continued for most of the reporting period. While most demonstrations remained relatively peaceful, some protesters engaged in violent activities and attempts to breach the fence. The Israel Defense Forces responded with riot dispersal means, including tear gas, and live ammunition, in some cases fatally. The indiscriminate firing of rockets, mortars and incendiary devices by Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other militants from Gaza also continued, in addition to strikes by the Israel Defense Forces against what they

defined as “militant targets”. Nevertheless, relative calm has prevailed since November 2019, including throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, between Israel and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza.

12. Egyptian-led mediation efforts supported by the United Nations prevented a full-scale escalation in Gaza on several occasions during the reporting period, allowing for, among other things, the implementation of some of the projects outlined in the package of urgent humanitarian and economic interventions for Gaza agreed upon by the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee in September 2018. In December 2019, the organizers of the protests along the Gaza perimeter fence announced that the weekly demonstrations at the fence would be on hold until the end of March. That continued to be the case through to the end of the reporting period.

13. More than two years since the October 2017 Egyptian-brokered intra-Palestinian reconciliation agreement, the United Nations continues to support Egyptian-led efforts to advance Palestinian unity, aimed at reunifying Gaza and the occupied West Bank under a single, democratic and legitimate national government. After the announcement of the United States vision, several Palestinian officials called for the resumption of the national dialogue. A delegation from the Fatah Central Committee visited Gaza from 7 to 12 February 2020. However, efforts to enable a visit of West Bank factions to Gaza were not successful during the reporting period. Between 27 February and 17 March, the Russian Federation hosted a series of bilateral discussions with representatives of Palestinian factions on the need to advance intra-Palestinian unity.

14. In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, acts of violence continued, including daily clashes, military operations, settler-related violence and various other incidents. There has been a significant increase in settler violence against Palestinians and their property since the outbreak of COVID-19 (73 incidents registered in March, compared to 39 in February). The most affected areas remained Nablus, particularly around the Yitzhar settlement bloc, followed by Hebron and Ramallah governorates. Tensions at the holy sites in Jerusalem continued.

15. Israeli settlement expansion more than doubled in Area C of the occupied West Bank during the reporting period. The Israeli authorities advanced plans for 13,700 settlement units, 4,000 of which reached the final stage of approval, and announced tenders for 2,400 units. In the previous reporting period, plans for 5,500 units were advanced and 3,300 tenders were announced. In occupied East Jerusalem settlements, plans for 1,300 units were advanced, compared with 2,100 in the previous reporting period. Tenders for 2,100 housing units were announced, including 1,077 units in the Givat HaMatos settlement located between the Palestinian neighbourhood of Beit Safafa in East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, impeding the former’s connection with a future Palestinian State. Moreover, on 25 February, Israel announced that it was advancing two plans for a total of 3,500 units in the E1 area which, if implemented, would expand the settlement of Ma’ale Adumim towards Jerusalem, severing the connection between the northern and southern West Bank and severely undermining the possibility of a viable and contiguous Palestinian State. Overall, about 30 per cent of the units advanced, approved or tendered during the reporting period are to be built in outlying locations, deep inside the occupied West Bank.

16. On 26 September, at the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, announced his intention to set a date for Palestinian elections. Despite broad internal political agreement and a series of compromises by all factions, President Abbas has not issued a decree calling for elections because Israel has yet to agree that elections can take place in East Jerusalem. The emergence of COVID-19 is another obstacle to the holding of elections in 2020.

17. Notwithstanding the continued challenges posed by the Israeli occupation, Palestinian women remain concerned about safety and security, livelihoods, employment opportunities, lack of political participation and access to education, health care and other services. In Gaza, women increasingly bear the brunt of the dire humanitarian conditions. Women are required to support their families while men are unemployed. Many live with extended families and struggle to find employment. In an effort to address that situation, by the end of 2019, UNRWA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank had helped to create 37,000 temporary jobs in Gaza, with cash-for-work programmes specifically targeting women and young people.

B. Humanitarian and socioeconomic context

Economic and fiscal developments

18. Economic conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were characterized by stagnant growth and rising unemployment. In 2019, gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 0.9 per cent (equal to the growth rate seen in 2018). The West Bank saw growth of only 1.2 per cent, while Gaza recorded no change.

19. The overall unemployment rate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was 24 per cent in 2019 (13.7 per cent in the West Bank and 42.7 per cent in Gaza). Women's participation in the labour force remains among the lowest in the world, at below 20 per cent.

20. The Palestinian Authority continues to face severe political and fiscal constraints on its ability to address Palestinian development challenges. Since February 2019, Israel and the Palestinian Authority have been locked in a dispute over the withholding by Israel of clearance revenues owed to the Palestinian Authority. The dispute has created an unprecedented fiscal challenge for the Palestinian Authority, which adopted emergency measures to cope with the loss of 65 per cent of revenues (15 per cent of GDP). On 3 October, Israel and the Palestinian Authority reached a partial agreement on clearance revenues, which resulted in the transfer of \$425 million to the latter. That eased the Palestinian Authority's fiscal crisis, but the underlying dispute remains unresolved.

21. In March 2020, COVID-19 spread across Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the wider region. The ability of the Palestinian health system to cope with the spread of the disease is severely impaired. The situation is particularly dire in Gaza, where the health system is undermined by Israeli closures, continued divisions between Palestinian factions, chronic power cuts and acute shortages of specialized staff, drugs and equipment.

22. Beyond the public health implications of COVID-19, the negative shock to the Palestinian economy will have profound implications for public welfare, employment, social cohesion, financial and fiscal stability, and institutional survival. In the short term, the Palestinian economy will be negatively affected by restrictions on movement, the closures of workplaces and retail shops, and the zeroing out of key sectors such as tourism and hospitality. The financial sector is likely to come under severe stress from both domestic and international sources. The fiscal stability of the Palestinian Authority will also be endangered by reduced revenues and potentially reduced donor support.

Humanitarian developments

23. A total of 113 Palestinians, including 21 children and 7 women, were killed in clashes with Israeli forces across the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Some 5,893 were

injured, including 2,192 children and 227 women, and a further 4,762 were treated for tear gas inhalation, including 2,029 children and 199 women. Those figures represent a decrease from the previous reporting period, when there were 299 deaths and 32,696 injuries. There were also 7 Israeli fatalities, including 2 women and 1 child, and a further 121 Israelis were injured, including 10 women and 5 children, compared with 14 Israeli fatalities and 137 injured in the previous reporting period.

24. Gaza continued to be a major flashpoint. A total of 15 Palestinians were killed and 4,445 were injured, with a further 1,856 treated for tear gas inhalation, during the “Great March of Return” protests near the perimeter fence. The fatalities included five children. A further 1,861 children were injured and 737 were treated for tear gas inhalation. The large scale of injuries from protests has overstretched the already limited health services in Gaza, which suffer from acute shortages of drugs, personnel, equipment and electricity. Over 1,200 Palestinians injured by live ammunition require limb reconstruction and some 150 have undergone amputations.

25. The demolition of Palestinian residential, livelihood and service infrastructure in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continued during the reporting period. The Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced owners to demolish at least 610 Palestinian-owned structures, including 140 donor-funded ones, throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, displacing around 850 Palestinians, half of them children. That constitutes an increase from the previous reporting period, when 502 structures were demolished, including 65 donor-funded ones, and 593 Palestinians were displaced. During the reporting period, one Palestinian household of five was forcibly evicted after settlers took over their home in occupied East Jerusalem.

Movement, humanitarian access and operational space

26. Humanitarian operations in the West Bank continued to be hampered by the imposition by Israel of physical obstacles (such as the Barrier, checkpoints, roadblocks and gates) and administrative barriers (such as the building permit regime). Those restrictions affect access to East Jerusalem and other areas between the Barrier and the Green Line.

27. There were on average 17,464 exits per month from Gaza by permit holders through the Israeli-controlled Erez crossing point, a 39 per cent increase compared with 2018. The permit approval rate for applications from patients needing to pass through the crossing to obtain medical treatment increased to 64 per cent, from 61 per cent in the previous year.

28. Kerem Shalom remained the primary crossing for the movement of commodities to and from Gaza, with some imports also allowed via the border with Egypt. On average, 8,349 truckloads of goods entered Gaza per month during 2019, 7 per cent lower than the monthly average in 2018. An average of 269 trucks per month exited Gaza, mostly to West Bank markets.

29. The Rafah crossing has been open since May 2018. However, movement has been impaired because of daily limits on the number of passengers. A total of 77,520 individuals exited to Egypt and 73,728 entered Gaza from Egypt, an increase of 4.5 per cent and 59.4 per cent, respectively, compared with the previous reporting period.

30. At different points during the reporting period, Israel expanded the permissible fishing area along southern and central parts of Gaza to 15 nautical miles, while keeping the 6 mile limit in the north. Restrictions, including full naval closures, were frequently reinstated in response to rocket fire against Israel. As a result, there were marginal improvements in livelihoods related to the fishing industry.

31. Israeli-imposed restrictions affected humanitarian personnel in Gaza. Until October 2019, most national staff working for the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were not permitted to exit Gaza for the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Following intensive advocacy efforts by the United Nations, international NGOs and Member States, the Israeli authorities eased that restriction in October 2019, allowing approximately 50 per cent of affected staff to access permits again. However, more than 160 staff of the United Nations and international NGOs are still not permitted to travel to the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

32. In March 2020, the Palestinian and Israeli authorities introduced measures to contain the COVID-19 outbreak, including progressively limiting movement into and within the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Erez crossing point has been closed since 12 March, with limited emergency movement only. The King Hussein (Allenby) border crossing between the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Jordan has been closed since 19 March, briefly reopening for the return of some Palestinians from Jordan on 31 March. Entry from abroad through Israel is limited to Israeli citizens, residents, including Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, and pre-approved international diplomatic personnel. The Kerem Shalom commercial crossing remains open and functional. The Rafah pedestrian crossing with Egypt has been mostly closed since 17 March, with exceptional openings for the return of Palestinians from abroad.

Barrier

33. The United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution [ES-10/17](#), continued its outreach and claim intake activities to “serve as a record, in documentary form, of the damage caused to all natural and legal persons concerned as a result of the construction of the wall by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem”. Since the establishment of the Register in 2007, more than 71,500 claims and over 1.5 million supporting documents have been collected in all nine governorates and in 267 of the 269 Palestinian communities affected by the wall.

III. United Nations response

A. Human and social development

34. The United Nations continued to coordinate and deliver humanitarian and development assistance in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Some of that assistance targeted Palestinian individuals and communities in areas beyond the reach of the Palestinian Authority, including East Jerusalem and Area C, in the occupied West Bank, and Gaza. The United Nations focused its efforts on the most vulnerable segments of the population.

Education

35. UNRWA provided free primary education to 282,360 students in 276 elementary and preparatory schools in Gaza and to a further 45,681 students in 96 elementary and preparatory schools in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

36. In Gaza, UNRWA completed the reconstruction of five schools to better accommodate an expanding student body. UNRWA provided training on violence against children and on reporting and investigation processes for 241 staff members.

37. In the West Bank, 4 UNRWA schools were reconstructed and a further 25 were rehabilitated.

38. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supported the integration of life skills teaching in schools. Following the training of 880 teachers, a total of 10,000 students were equipped with life skills to enhance their resilience.

39. UNICEF facilitated safe access to school for 6,856 children and teachers in the West Bank through protective accompaniment, particularly in Hebron. The UNICEF remedial education programme helped 5,411 students to overcome learning difficulties and catch up on missed education.

40. UNICEF raised awareness of early detection of developmental delays in children, which resulted in 375 preschool children in Gaza being screened for developmental delays and 17,394 children being screened for hearing difficulties.

41. UNDP supported improved access to education for 28,000 primary and secondary school students in East Jerusalem. Some 7,500 university students benefited from improved learning environments through the rehabilitation of Al-Quds University. In Gaza, around 630 undergraduate students benefited from the Al Fakhoura Scholarship and Empowerment Programme.

42. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) provided psychosocial support and training in life skills through sports programmes for 22 schools in Gaza and 16 schools in East Jerusalem.

43. In Gaza, the Mine Action Service provided training to over 17,000 persons at risk of being harmed by explosive remnants of war. The Mine Action Service continues to provide support regarding the explosive ordnance disposal requirements of all United Nations school facilities in Gaza.

Health

44. In 2019, UNRWA provided over 4.2 million primary health-care patient consultations at its 22 health-care facilities in Gaza, and over 1.1 million consultations in the West Bank at its 43 health-care facilities. In addition, 27,092 Palestine refugees in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and a further 10,966 Palestine refugees in Gaza received assistance for secondary and tertiary health-care costs. UNRWA completed the reconstruction of one health centre in Gaza and one health centre in the West Bank.

45. The World Health Organization (WHO) continued to promote universal health coverage, including health financing, service delivery planning, primary health care, health-care quality and patient safety. WHO worked to strengthen the quality, use and management of hospital-based health information; assisted with the integration of a family practice approach in primary care; supported the validation and analysis of national health accounts, the measurement of financial risk protection and projections of health expenditures; worked to implement a national e-health strategy; and provided technical and material support to the East Jerusalem hospitals network.

46. WHO supported the implementation of a system-strengthening approach to reduce neonatal mortality. Ten maternity hospitals in Gaza received support for capacity-building and quality improvement.

47. WHO supported the Ministry of Health and UNRWA primary health-care facilities to implement and develop mental health emergency response plans.

48. UNICEF provided technical support to increase the capacity of health-care, education and social service providers in delivering quality health care, nutrition and

other services. Some 320 professionals and 40 community activators were trained. As a result, over 2,030 children benefited from early detection and intervention services.

49. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) strengthened capacities in the health-care sector, focusing on obstetric care protocols and training some 294 physicians, nurses and midwives. UNFPA worked to strengthen midwifery education and trained 225 students.

50. UNFPA supported youth-friendly health centres at universities in the West Bank and Gaza, providing services for some 20,000 young people.

51. Over 4,200 women were provided with breast cancer-related health-care services through UNFPA-supported interventions, while breast cancer awareness-raising activities reached 25,000 people.

52. The rehabilitation by UNDP of critical health-care units at Yatta and Jenin hospitals in the West Bank will benefit 45,000 patients annually.

53. In Gaza, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) is supporting the installation of a 715 kilo-volt-ampere (kVA) solar power system at the European Gaza Hospital, enabling access to a sustainable source of electricity and reduced interruption of health-care services.

Water and sanitation

54. To increase access to safe drinking water in Gaza, UNICEF is supporting the expansion phase of the solar field at the Southern Gaza Seawater Desalination Plant, which will eventually benefit 250,000 people.

55. UNDP supported improved access to wastewater services for 457,000 people in Khan Younis and Rafah. UNDP also installed 14 small-scale desalination units at schools and universities, providing access to high-quality drinking water for 56,000 students in Gaza. Through these interventions, 8,500 people in the West Bank have increased access to municipal wastewater collection systems.

56. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) supported access to irrigation for 20,000 households in the West Bank and Gaza through groundwater wells, rainwater harvesting cisterns, water towers, reservoirs and irrigation wells.

57. UNOPS, in collaboration with UNRWA, is supporting the construction of wastewater collection and storm water drainage systems in Jericho to improve health and hygiene conditions.

58. The Mine Action Service provided risk assessments for water projects implemented by UNICEF, the Palestinian Water Authority and the Office of the Quartet. The risk assessments helped to clear 190,550 m² of land and benefited projects valued at \$255 million.

Employment

59. The UNDP cash-for-work programme helped to provide 3,624 short-term jobs, generating approximately 462,675 workdays.

60. FAO established a mechanism for supporting private investments in agribusiness by matching investment grants. FAO issued a first call for investment proposals and selected 114 eligible investments, which are receiving support totalling \$4.5 million.

61. FAO provided training to 200 women on post-harvest processing, sorting and packaging of dates to increase their employment opportunities in value-added sectors.

A total of 164 women secured employment after receiving the training. In addition, FAO provided 2,720 women with in-kind support and training to develop and expand their businesses.

62. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) continued to lead the review of the Palestinian Labour Law from a gender perspective. Draft amendments to seven articles of the Law were introduced, with the aim of closing the gender gap in the employment sector and ensuring decent work conditions for women and men.

63. ILO organized training activities for 72 labour inspectors on gender-responsive labour inspection.

64. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) launched a prisoner rehabilitation programme in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Labour. In 2019, nine prisoners received diplomas in technical and vocational training.

Targeted social protection

65. In Gaza, UNRWA distributed 395,740 food parcels to 21,516 Palestinian refugee households (98,935 individuals) classified as abject poor. Another 36,129 beneficiaries in the West Bank were assisted through cash-based transfers.

66. In 2019, 5,208 women and 501 men in the West Bank and Gaza accessed protection-related services supported by UN-Women. An additional 250 women who are survivors of gender-based violence accessed cash-for-work assistance and skills development in Gaza.

67. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Social Development in the revision of the National Social Development Sector Strategy 2017–2020 and in the midterm review of the strategy. A revised version of the strategy will cover the period 2020–2022.

68. In Gaza, UNICEF reached 10,278 children through family centres, with various targeted psychosocial support interventions.

69. In the West Bank, UNICEF, through local partners, provided 399 children with structured psychosocial support. In addition, 451 children under arrest were provided with legal aid services and 910 people benefited from legal awareness-raising sessions, including at schools.

70. Throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, UNICEF child protection services reached 45,622 children through 28 child protection partners. A total of 4,208 children also accessed individual case management support services. Structured psychosocial support services were provided to 72,010 caregivers. In the West Bank, child protection partners reached 10,921 people, and 1,191 children were provided with structured psychosocial activities.

71. The World Food Programme (WFP) continued to support the Palestinian Authority's social safety net programme, which provides 270,000 people in Gaza and the West Bank with cash-based transfers. WFP supported a further 75,000 people with in-kind food distributions.

Culture

72. UNDP provided 20,000 workdays through the upgrade of the Maqam en-Nabi Musa cultural heritage site and other structural rehabilitation projects.

73. UNESCO rehabilitated eight cultural heritage sites and trained 13 professionals in cultural heritage preservation. The initiatives provided temporary job opportunities totalling 10,440 working days.

74. UNESCO supported institutional development through specialized capacity-building training sessions on obligations under cultural conventions ratified by the State of Palestine.

Food security and agriculture

75. FAO and WFP supported the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics to produce and analyse the 2018 Socio-Economic and Food Security Survey. FAO also provided technical support to the Ministry of Agriculture to formulate a national investment plan for food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture.

76. In the West Bank, FAO assisted vulnerable Bedouin communities to protect their predominantly herding-based livelihoods. Movable animal shelters were provided to 2,172 Bedouin families. FAO also provided 4,000 Bedouin and herder households with drought-tolerant fodder seeds.

77. FAO increased the productivity of 5,080 small- and medium-scale farmers in agriculture cooperatives in the West Bank, through the provision of in-kind and technical support, including post-harvest technologies, agricultural tractors, planting and harvesting machines, drying facilities and agricultural nurseries.

Human rights, women, children and youth

78. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continued supporting the national human rights institution and civil society organizations to build their capacities to engage with the treaty body mechanisms and strengthen their monitoring and follow-up of the implementation by the Government of the State of Palestine of its international human rights treaty obligations.

79. UNICEF, UN-Women and UNDP continued to strengthen the capacity of Palestinian institutions to provide child justice services. A total of 451 children under arrest benefited from legal aid services and 910 people benefited from legal awareness-raising sessions. Specific capacity-building programmes were developed, targeting 100 juvenile police officers, 35 child protection counsellors and 57 lawyers.

80. UNICEF, UN-Women and UNDP facilitated access to legal aid services for 17,615 people. Some 12,713 people benefited directly from awareness-raising activities aimed at increasing access to information related to women's rights and gender justice.

81. UN-Women helped to facilitate access to legal aid for 58 women inmates in the West Bank and 47 women inmates in Gaza. In addition, 93 women inmates in the West Bank and 50 women inmates in Gaza obtained psychosocial support.

82. UN-Women supported the Palestinian Bar Association in Gaza to develop its gender strategy. Furthermore, 25 women lawyers received training in order to improve the services provided and increase the representation of women in sharia courts. A total of 591 students (334 women and 257 men) attended civic education awareness-raising sessions. In addition, 25 women journalists received training in gender justice and women's access to justice.

83. UNICEF rehabilitation and therapeutic services reached 1,730 vulnerable and at-risk children and 850 parents in East Jerusalem.

84. UNICEF, in conjunction with OHCHR and the United Nations country team, prepared a confidential report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The

Committee on the Rights of the Child made its recommendations to the State of Palestine after discussing the report with a delegation from the State of Palestine in Geneva in January 2020.

85. UNFPA developed 10 safe spaces for women, which provided services to over 5,000 survivors of gender-based violence. UNFPA supported efforts to increase capacities in the clinical management of rape, training 20 trainers within relevant institutions. Further enhancement of capacities in relation to gender-based violence were provided to 160 non-specialist staff.

86. UNFPA supported the establishment of family counselling clinics in all hospitals and directorates of health in the West Bank and Gaza. UNFPA worked to strengthen the capacity of health providers in the detection, treatment and referral of cases of gender-based violence. Over 70 gender-based violence focal points were trained to provide counselling.

87. UNOPS and UN-Women are supporting the rehabilitation of four shelters for women to ensure improved protection services at the shelters.

88. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) undertook a survey to assess the safety and inclusivity of public spaces, with a focus on women and girls in the most disadvantaged communities. More than 200 students benefited from awareness-raising campaigns as a result of the assessment.

89. In 2019, UNODC delivered a forensic medicine training programme in sexual and gender-based violence for 155 health professionals and first responders. UNODC also delivered four awareness-raising workshops on criminal justice services for women survivors of violence.

90. In Gaza, the Mine Action Service implemented a community-based resilience training initiative focusing on women's empowerment, which reached 4,563 individuals, including 3,631 women.

91. In the West Bank, UNRWA provided counselling services to 433 survivors of gender-based violence and child abuse and to 90 survivors of elder neglect. Of those cases, 182 received health-care, relief and social services from UNRWA. An additional 102 cases were referred for external services. Furthermore, 71 emergency cases received immediate assistance and 1,918 individuals received group counselling.

92. In Gaza, UNRWA provided mental health and psychosocial support to vulnerable adults and children through its programmes. UNRWA referred 1,231 women in Gaza to legal counsellors to receive guidance. Awareness-raising sessions reached 2,475 beneficiaries, while community awareness and prevention activities relating to gender-based violence reached a further 1,587 Palestine refugees.

Environment, housing and urban development

93. UNDP supported 168 vulnerable families in accessing adequate, safe and affordable housing in East Jerusalem. In Gaza, UNDP supported the upgrading of six sports fields and playgrounds.

94. UNOPS is supporting the construction of a wastewater treatment plant at the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park, which will reduce the load of industrial wastewater generated.

95. UN-Habitat delivered spatial planning support in partnership with over 20 local implementing partners, targeting over 1.5 million Palestinians in more than 200 communities across the West Bank. In East Jerusalem, UN-Habitat has completed the rehabilitation of seven residential units, in addition to a community courtyard.

96. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) delivered the full draft State of the Environment report to the Governments of Israel and the State of Palestine for their comments. UNEP also continued to support the Environment Quality Authority in the implementation of the Palestinian sustainable consumption and production national action plan.

B. United Nations system emergency assistance

97. An estimated 2.4 million Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory need humanitarian assistance. Given donors' limited resources, humanitarian agencies continue to streamline and prioritize activities to target the maximum number of vulnerable people in a highly constrained context. To that end, humanitarian agencies had three priorities during the reporting period: protecting civilians; providing basic services and improved access to resources to enhance livelihoods; and supporting vulnerable Palestinians to cope with the protracted crisis. The inter-agency COVID-19 response plan for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, released in April, was designed to enable effective public health and multisector interventions, with a continued emphasis on supporting the most vulnerable people. It aims to support the efforts, led by the Government of the State of Palestine, to contain the disease and mitigate its impact.

Emergency agriculture support

98. UNDP provided nine mobile veterinary clinics to deliver extension services to livestock breeders in the West Bank. UNDP also supported the rehabilitation of 152.5 dunums of land, benefiting 27 farmers in the West Bank.

99. FAO assisted 1,094 farmers and herders in Gaza to restore their irrigation levels and livestock and dairy production. FAO provided beneficiaries with solar energy units to operate poultry and dairy farms and irrigation ponds and wells.

100. FAO provided support to 6,965 herders to reduce the mortality rate of newborn animals, improve productivity and enhance the profitability of herding. FAO also delivered essential training to 1,200 herders on animal health management, biosafety and biosecurity.

Emergency food support

101. UNRWA supported 1,036,385 beneficiaries through in-kind emergency food assistance. Of those, 604,193 Palestinians, including 11,970 female-headed households and 36,949 persons with disabilities, living below the abject poverty line received 79.8 per cent of their daily caloric needs, while 432,192 Palestinians, including 4,856 female-headed households and 5,799 persons with disabilities, living below the absolute poverty line received 42.95 per cent of their daily caloric needs.

102. UNRWA, in partnership with WFP, provided in-kind food assistance to more than 37,000 members of Bedouin communities. A further 25,578 food-insecure individuals in the West Bank received cash assistance from UNRWA.

103. In Gaza, UNICEF assessed a total of 10,602 young children for malnutrition and developmental delays, and 3,340 children were treated for malnutrition. Some 4,514 high-risk pregnant and lactating women benefited from 211 educational sessions, and 9,306 pregnant and lactating women benefited from individual counselling sessions on child health, nutrition and hygiene.

Emergency education support

104. Nearly 10,000 children at risk of dropping out of school in Gaza benefited from the UNICEF-funded remedial education programme for improved literacy and numeracy.

105. UNICEF facilitated access to education for over 6,400 children and teachers by enabling them to travel to and from schools in Area C and the H2 area of Hebron.

106. UNICEF distributed 7,000 emergency education kits to vulnerable children in Gaza.

Emergency health support

107. UNRWA provided medical assistance to 3,444 patients for demonstration-related injuries. Around 84 per cent of those injuries were from gunshots, of which two thirds were classified as moderate or severe. Of those treated in UNRWA health centres, 723 or 20 per cent were children under the age of 18, 79 per cent of whom were treated for gunshot injuries.

108. In Gaza, UNRWA school counsellors provided 123,251 students with life skills education. Counsellors also provided structured group interventions to 6,866 children. Moreover, 11,057 at-risk students were supported with individual counselling and 34,196 parents attended parent education sessions at school.

109. Mental health counsellors provided counselling to 6,407 adults in UNRWA health centres in Gaza. This was complemented by psychoeducation and group counselling sessions benefiting 2,583 adults. In addition, 17,570 Palestinians participated in psychosocial support sessions related to the impact of demonstrations and the general context in Gaza. Some 8,655 adults benefited from public awareness-raising sessions, while 5,486 adults received one-time individual consultations and advice concerning personal, family and social issues.

110. WHO supported the procurement and delivery of essential medical supplies and drugs to address critical shortages in the health sector. WHO worked closely with UNFPA and other partners to ensure the delivery of primary health care to Palestinians dependent on mobile health clinics in Area C and the H2 area of Hebron in the West Bank. In Gaza, WHO supported the provision of medical supplies for effective public health responses and preparedness.

111. UNICEF supported the upgrading of neonatal health-care services in hospitals in the West Bank, benefiting 540 children annually. UNICEF also supported the improvement of five neonatal health-care units in Gaza. Around 14,650 newborns in Gaza benefited from that support.

112. UNICEF provided maternal and neonatal care and nutrition-related services by facilitating postnatal home visits that reached 6,579 women and their newborns, including new mothers who had experienced high-risk pregnancies. UNICEF also supported the training of around 60 nurses and midwives in Gaza.

Emergency housing support

113. UNOPS supported the import of construction materials to Gaza, including around 332,239 tons of cement in 2019. The materials were used for building or preparing for the rebuilding of homes for 7,317 families in Gaza.

114. UNOPS is implementing the second phase of the reconstruction of destroyed houses in Gaza, which has benefited 211 families so far.

115. Between the end of hostilities in August 2014 and February 2020, the assistance provided by UNRWA has allowed over 90,111 families to complete the repair of their homes, including the rebuilding of 4,694 destroyed homes.

116. UNRWA provided cash assistance to 65 displaced families following the demolition of their homes by the Israeli authorities. Furthermore, 409 Palestine refugee families received cash assistance and referrals to meet their humanitarian needs caused by search and arrest operations by Israeli security forces in Palestine refugee camps.

117. UNDP supported 1,572 internally displaced people to return to their homes following the reconstruction and repair of 280 totally damaged and 2 severely damaged housing units in Gaza.

Emergency income generation

118. As part of the package of urgent support for Gaza agreed upon by the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, UNDP and UNRWA helped to provide 3,624 people with short-term job opportunities through cash-for-work modalities, generating approximately 462,675 workdays, while UNRWA created a further 7,961 short-term job opportunities.

119. Overall in 2019, the United Nations created more than 30,000 temporary jobs in Gaza. UNRWA created 1,230,992 workdays, which translated into short-term job opportunities for 13,572 vulnerable individuals, benefiting a total of 78,500 workers and their family members and injecting \$16.8 million into the local economy. UNDP created 16,532 jobs

120. In 2019, UNRWA spent approximately \$20.2 million on construction projects and self-help shelter repair and reconstruction, generating 1,043 full-time job-equivalents in Gaza.

Emergency water and sanitation support

121. UNICEF and WFP supported vulnerable families in Gaza with hygiene kits and hygiene awareness-raising sessions. The programme provided 3,183 vulnerable families with water, sanitation and hygiene support.

122. UNRWA continued to provide basic water, sanitation and hygiene services in Palestine refugee camps in Gaza to prevent the outbreak of infectious diseases and other public health hazards.

123. In 2019, UNRWA provided solid waste management services in 8 Palestine refugee camps in Gaza (housing approximately 560,000 registered Palestine refugees) and 19 camps in the West Bank (housing more than 261,000 registered refugees).

C. United Nations system support to Palestinian institutions

124. UNICEF and WHO supported the Ministry of Health to strengthen planning, costing and budgeting for immunization programmes.

125. UNICEF strengthened the Palestinian Water Authority's institutional mechanisms for overseeing works and programme management. UNICEF also supported the Palestinian Water Authority to increase accountability by strengthening the capacity and systems of national water, sanitation and hygiene authorities.

126. UNDP strengthened the capacity of the Ministry of Health by training more than 2,000 health personnel in health-care waste separation and management within health-care facilities.

127. UNDP supported the Ministry of Agriculture to enable the efficient production of higher value crops and to strengthen agricultural-based livelihoods. Around 200 staff and 40 researchers from the Ministry of Agriculture benefited from that intervention.

128. WHO continued to strengthen core capacities for the International Health Regulations in order to enhance the detection and assessment of and response to public health events, in conjunction with the national emergency preparedness plan.

129. WFP provided support to the Ministry of Social Development to improve its statistical analysis and targeting of food-insecure people and assist with the creation of a unified social welfare data portal. WFP, ILO and UNICEF are supporting the Ministry of Social Development in strengthening the capacity of national systems for persons with disabilities and elderly people.

130. FAO supported the regulatory framework and capacity development of the Government of the State of Palestine in the area of sanitary and phytosanitary capacity, quality control and food safety.

131. FAO supported two food safety laboratories in Gaza to acquire ISO 17025 accreditation.

132. UNOPS continued to provide technical assistance to the High Judicial Council to strengthen its capacities for strategic planning and operational management of facilities.

133. UNOPS renovated two vehicle maintenance facilities for the security forces of the Palestinian Authority.

134. OHCHR supported the Government of the State of Palestine with drafting its State party reports under the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and helped it to prepare for constructive dialogues with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, OHCHR conducted a broad range of capacity-building activities to increase awareness and knowledge of human rights standards within the institutions of the security and justice sectors and to strengthen their ability to mainstream human rights into national plans, policies and legislation. Notably, OHCHR helped the Government of the State of Palestine to set up a national preventive mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.

135. UNODC supported the forensic science laboratory of the Palestinian Civil Police. UNODC helped to establish a new biological screening services section within the laboratory, for the examination of biological evidence of sexual and gender-based violence, and provided training in that regard.

136. In 2020, UNODC provided further technical assistance to the national programme on drug control, crime prevention and criminal justice, in the revision of a draft law to combat human trafficking in the State of Palestine.

137. UNFPA procured life-saving supplies and essential medications to meet the needs of 20,000 pregnant women in Gaza. Some 37 health-care workers received training on the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health and its application in emergencies and in cases of gender-based violence. A further 50 workers were trained on safe delivery in emergencies, and some 25 health institutions were given training in how to implement the Minimum Initial Service Package.

138. UN-Women facilitated training for 239 key justice and security actors on gender mainstreaming, the provision of responsive services for women victims of violence,

the existing national referral system for such victims and responsive adjudication of cases of violence against women.

139. In 2019, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) continued to provide recurrent advisory services to the Forecasting Unit of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, which uses the UNCTAD macroeconomic model of the Palestinian economy and is run by professional staff trained and continuously advised by UNCTAD.

140. The Mine Action Service supported the Palestine Mine Action Center by providing risk education workshops, which have helped the Center to formulate a risk education strategy that will benefit 500,000 individuals in the West Bank. The Mine Action Service has continued to provide technical guidance and advice to the Center to support it in meeting its obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

D. Private sector development

141. In 2019, UNRWA provided 2,922 microfinance loans worth \$3.07 million to Palestine refugees in Gaza and conducted training for 1,831 participants. In the West Bank, UNRWA delivered 10,161 loans, valued at \$14.5 million.

142. ILO provided young people with financial and non-financial support to start sustainable small enterprises and create decent job opportunities. ILO provided support for the legal and institutional establishment of the Cooperative Work Agency, to help it to fulfil its mandate in serving the cooperative sector as a regulatory administrative body and a centre of promotional services.

143. UN-Women provided technical assistance to the financial sector, in particular the banking sector, with the aim of mainstreaming gender in the workplace and improving women's access to upper-level management positions.

144. UNDP supported the efforts of the Palestinian Industrial Estates and Free Zones Authority to increase the competitiveness of Palestinian products through the provision of clean, reliable and affordable energy.

E. Coordination of United Nations assistance

145. Collaboration and coordination between donors and United Nations entities continued under the auspices of the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The humanitarian country team met regularly to agree on humanitarian advocacy and response measures. The United Nations country team continued to coordinate its development programming with the priorities outlined in the Palestinian National Policy Agenda for 2017–2022.

IV. Donor response to the crisis

Budgetary and fiscal support

146. The Palestinian Authority continued to face severe fiscal constraints on its ability to address humanitarian and development needs. Since February 2019, Israel and the Palestinian Authority have been locked in a dispute over the withholding by Israel of clearance revenues owed to the Palestinian Authority. That situation has created an unprecedented fiscal challenge for the Palestinian Authority, which

adopted emergency measures to cope with the loss of 65 per cent of its revenues, equal to some 15 per cent of GDP. To finance the deficit, the Palestinian Authority relied on donor support and financing from national banks.

147. Donor support to the Occupied Palestinian Territory remained at near historic lows, owing to a decision by the United States to cease funding UNRWA and to divert a significant portion of the programme budget of the United States Agency for International Development elsewhere.

Donor coordination

148. The local aid coordination structure was further reformed and brought under the Office of the Prime Minister. The structure continued to function as the main forum for Government-led coordination of donor-funded development interventions in 15 sectors.

149. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee held two meetings, in April and in September 2019, and maintained its strong support for the implementation of the package of urgent humanitarian and economic interventions agreed upon in September 2018. The interventions enabled significant improvements in 2019 in the fields of energy, health, water and sanitation, and job creation. They helped to provide space for political efforts by Egypt, the United Nations and others to prevent renewed conflict and support Palestinian reconciliation. They also provided the impetus for larger scale development projects. More than 37,000 jobs were created by the United Nations and the World Bank during 2019. Qatar-funded fuel supplies for the power plant in Gaza doubled the electricity supply to Gaza. Important progress was also made on the construction of critical water and sanitation facilities and imports of equipment for the health-care sector.

V. Unmet needs

150. Under the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, \$348 million is sought to fund assistance and protection for the 1.5 million Palestinians most in need of protection, access to essential services and interventions in view of the occupation and repeated shocks. For 2019, 73 per cent of the funding for the Humanitarian Response Plan was secured.

151. Severe financial challenges continued to constrain UNRWA operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Efforts to stabilize emergency operations were only possible through a loan and grant from the Central Emergency Response Fund and additional contributions and advances from donors, as well as advances from the UNRWA programme budget. Despite a significantly lower request for emergency funding, only \$81 million (58.6 per cent of the amount sought) was provided for the 2019 UNRWA emergency appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In January 2020, UNRWA launched its 2020 budget appeal, calling for a minimum of \$1.4 billion to fund the Agency's essential services and assistance, including life-saving humanitarian aid, for 5.6 million registered Palestine refugees.

VI. Challenges

152. The continued absence of a political process to end the occupation and achieve a viable two-State solution continues to be the largest impediment to Palestinian development. Continued Israeli settlement expansion, demolitions, closures, access and movement restrictions, and other aspects of the protracted military occupation continue to have a severe impact on the humanitarian, social and political life of

Palestinians and their ability to exercise their fundamental human rights. Violence and incitement continue to perpetuate mutual fear and suspicion. The political division between the West Bank and Gaza places severe obstacles to addressing humanitarian needs and restoring a political horizon. Decreasing funding to the State of Palestine, and to the United Nations, poses a further challenge to the provision of development and humanitarian assistance.

153. In the final weeks of the reporting period, the COVID-19 outbreak escalated in Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the wider region. The pandemic is likely to have far-reaching humanitarian and development consequences, and an unprecedented resource gap will almost certainly emerge.

VII. Conclusions

154. The operational context for the work of the United Nations during the reporting period was increasingly difficult because of the challenges outlined in the present report. The United Nations will continue to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [1397 \(2002\)](#), [1515 \(2003\)](#), [1850 \(2008\)](#), [1860 \(2009\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#), an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel. It is only by realizing the vision of two States living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the State of Palestine, and all final status issues resolved permanently through negotiations, that the legitimate aspirations of both peoples will be achieved.
