

OQ Head of Mission, Dr. John N. Clarke

Ministerial Plenary

***Ad Hoc* Liaison Committee Meeting**

22 September 2022, New York

Prime Minister, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Given the short time available, I will focus on three issues that have recurred both in yesterday's thematic meeting but also in a number of today's interventions.

The first is the connection between the on the ground, practical measures on which our report is focused and the objective of realizing the two state solution. Progress that has already been referred to, on 4G/5G, eVat, water and wastewater, Gas for Gaza, and utility scale renewable energy in area C all benefit Palestinians, but in our view, also provide a fulcrum that can re-enforce, but never replace progress towards a two state solution.

The second point relates to stabilising the financing for Prime Minister Ishtayyeh's government in the short term, but also ensuring the long-term fiscal independence and sustainability of future Governments.

Yesterday we heard from Minister Bishara on the cycle of recurring budget deficits, and the essential ongoing and future reform efforts which can now be accelerated. Those efforts must, however, be accompanied by three other complementary measures: first, the resolution of the many long-standing fiscal files; second improvements in movement and trade to enable economic growth and thereby private sector-led job creation and finally the maintenance of transitional budget support along with investments in those sectors that will enable improved services and economic growth including energy, water, telecommunications, and health.

Third, and finally, in pursuing this work, the question has arisen as to how we measure our progress and against what metrics we measure success? For example, in Gaza by 2030 we project that there will be an estimated 465,000 new entrants into the labour market which will mean an unparalleled unemployment problem. The scale of that challenge requires that we look now at both policy and programming that will accelerate job creation within Gaza. So our metrics and benchmarks need to be defined in a manner that allows us to address these challenges at the scale required.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you, and we look forward to continuing to work with you in support of this important agenda.