



**Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN
Geneva**

Statement

350th Session of the Governing Body of ILO
Report on crisis-related ILO work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory
GB.350/POL/4(Rev.1)
Statement delivered by Ambassador Bilal Ahmad, Permanent Representative on
behalf of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)
(13 March 2024)

Mr. Chairperson,

I take the floor on behalf of member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

In 1919, the ILO Constitution was adopted, and its Preamble reads “*The High Contracting Parties, moved by sentiments of justice and humanity as well as by the desire to secure the permanent peace of the world, and with a view to attaining the objectives set forth in this Preamble.*”

These opening words of the ILO’s constitution provide the common ground that holds us together. The values of social justice, humanity and yearning for enduring peace are at the foundation of our work in ILO- and as of today, targeted destruction of Gaza and its people is the biggest threat to these values.

We thank the ILO for presenting the Report which points a sobering picture of Palestinian economy and its impact on employment, social welfare and sustainable livelihoods. I take this opportunity to convey our deep appreciation for continued efforts and important initiatives taken by the ILO to support workers and mitigate the adverse effects of the crisis being faced in Gaza and West Bank.

We reaffirm, unequivocally, that OIC will continue to stand by the brotherly people of Palestine.

Mr. Chairperson,

We take note that the current crisis has exacerbated pre-existing issues and created new hurdles for labour force in the Occupied Palestine Territory. From widespread job losses to precarious working conditions, their workers are facing unprecedented challenges that demand urgent attention and action.

First and foremost, the economic downturn resulting from the crisis has led to a significant rise in unemployment rates across various sectors. Many workers have lost their livelihoods, pushing them into poverty and uncertainty about their future.

Furthermore, the crisis has exposed and amplified inequalities within labor market. Vulnerable groups, such as women, migrants, and informal workers, are disproportionately affected by job losses and lack of social protection. It is imperative that we address these disparities and ensure that all workers have access to fair wages, decent working conditions, and social security.

Since November 2023, the Occupied Palestinian Territory has suffered a significant loss of employment totaling 468,000 approximately, in which 66 percent of jobs disappearing in the Gaza Strip and 32 percent in the West Bank, resulting in daily labour income losses amounting US\$20.5 million.

The workers continue to suffer the socio-economic consequences of the 56-year occupation and remain trapped in poverty.

The latest events have only added to the woes of the Palestinians in general and Gazans in particular.

Mr. Chairperson,

The disruptive impact of on-going violence on workers in the area presents a huge challenge in the months and years ahead.

With no surprise, and in line with analysis by every other United Nations agency, the report points at continuing occupation as the primary root cause of the dismal social and economic situation.

Declining financial capacity of the Palestinian Authority adversely impacts its ability to support employment. In this regard, the report's findings on unilateral deductions of clearance revenues by Israeli authorities and decreasing external funding merit attention.

We welcome the ILO's three-phase emergency response programme in the form of relief, review and recovery.

Chairperson,

We affirm the importance of ILO programme of development cooperation in the occupied Arab territories in contributing to outcome of the second and third Palestinian Decent Work Programme.

We would like to appreciate all those countries who have contributed to the ILO's development cooperation program in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

We join the Office in its call for Member States, development partners and donors to provide financial support for the implementation of ongoing projects and the rehabilitation work required in the aftermath of recent tragedies.

Mr. Chairperson,

Last but not the least, the challenges faced by the workers and labourers in OPT are immense, but not insurmountable. Through collective action and collaboration, we can overcome these obstacles and build a more resilient and inclusive labor market. We are fully committed to addressing the needs of those workers and ensuring that they emerge from this crisis stronger and more empowered than ever before.

We support the proposed course of action outlined in paragraphs 29 to 36 of the document GB.350/Pol/4(Rev.1).

We appreciate the Office for the draft decision point at paragraph 37. However, the OIC group of countries would like to introduce minor amendments to the draft decision]. The purpose of these amendments is to enhance Office's engagements to protect the workers and employers in the conflict zone and ensure follow up actions on the reports of the Director General.

As I said, these are minor adjustments. I earnestly hope that the constituents would be flexible to the amendments proposed on behalf of OIC group of countries and we would be able to adopt a consensus decision on this important agenda item.

I thank you, Chair.
