



**Statement by Pakistan at the 74<sup>th</sup> Executive Session of the Trade and  
Development Board  
22 November 2023**

***Agenda item 6: Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people***

**President of Trade & Development Board Mr. Febrian Ruddyard,  
Secretary-General of UNCTAD Ms. Rebecca Grynspan,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,**

At the outset, my delegation would like to express its solidarity with the people of Palestine who have faced decades of occupation. Innocent civilians in Gaza are being made to suffer grave breaches of international humanitarian law. We condemn the war crimes against the Palestinian people and call on the international community to advocate for immediate cessation of hostilities and provision of uninterrupted humanitarian assistance.

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the OIC and by Tanzania on behalf of G-77 and China. We appreciate UNCTAD for its professional research-work and on UNCTAD's Assistance to the Palestinian People in 2022. The report provides Member States and the international community with important updates on the debilitating economic and social circumstances in the occupied Palestinian territory.

We remain deeply concerned about the devastating economic impacts of the prolonged occupation on the Palestinian people, their living conditions, the environment, and their opportunities for development as highlighted in the report. All economic measures indicate that the real GDP of the occupied territories has been consistently declining on a year-on-year over the last decade. The unemployment and poverty crises have rendered 40 per cent of the population dependent upon humanitarian assistance and 61 per cent severely food insecure.

Since the beginning of the current escalation, over 60 percent of employment has been lost in Gaza resulting in the loss of 182000 jobs. Additionally, 15200 workers in the West Bank, 95% of those employed in settlements have lost their jobs and remain at risk due to restrictions on Palestinian access to the labour market.

In addition, the vicious cycle of destruction and partial reconstruction in Gaza continues to deny the Palestinian people a means of charting a self-sustaining path to development. Precious resources that can be channeled to the development of Gaza, continue to be diverted to incessant restoration efforts after every escalation. All necessary measures to stabilize Palestine's economy and ameliorate the fiscal situation of the Palestinian government need to be undertaken to ensure that the Palestinian people can overcome the detrimental impact of the prolonged occupation.

**Mr. President,**

We echo UNCTAD's recommendation that the Palestinian people must be allowed the right to produce, develop and trade normally with the rest of the world. The UNCTAD report maintains that the occupation remains the main obstacle to development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Palestinians' right to development is severely impeded by the air, land and sea blockade. The crisis has engulfed all sectors of the economy, including tourism, construction, services, industrial and agricultural sectors.

The Palestinian economy, by virtue of its complex dependence on the occupier's economy, for its trade and development, does not have its own fiscal or monetary space and remains vulnerable to economic exploitation and manipulation by Israel. For the Palestinian people, their occupation has meant decades of de-development, suppressed human potential and denial of the right to development. There is still no end in sight.

**Mr. President,**

Palestinian difficulties are compounded by the ongoing ethnic cleansing campaign and the continuation of settler colonialism in flagrant violation of UN Security Council Resolution 2334. The ongoing part of the conflict is one of the most difficult times that the Palestinian people have witnessed. Today, the economic progress of Palestine is a question of their survival.

**Mr. President,**

Recovery in 2023 and beyond depends on actions that will or will not be taken and the scale of donor support. We appreciate UNCTAD's efforts to deliver technical cooperation, training, and advisory services to the Palestinian people, and complete a project on developing Palestinian trade facilitation capacity.

We urge UNCTAD to continue to provide assistance to the Palestinian people in the form of advisory services, research and policy papers, technical cooperation projects and capacity-building and training for Palestinian professionals from the public and private sectors. We also encourage UNCTAD to make all efforts to strengthen its Unit for Assistance to the Palestinian People by appropriately staffing and resourcing it through extra-budgetary resources to allow for the full implementation of the UNCTAD mandate approved by the Nairobi Maafikiano and Bridgetown Covenants as well as by the General Assembly resolutions which inter alia request UNCTAD to assess the economic cost of occupation.

We believe that an end to the occupation and establishment of an independent State of Palestine is the only viable route for prosperity and lasting peace in the Middle East.

**I Thank you.**

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