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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE
INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 1997

I. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE
INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

1. The mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for 1997 is contained in General Assembly resolutions 51/23, 51/24 and 51/25 of 4 December 1996.
2. In paragraphs 2 to 4 of resolution 51/23, the General Assembly considered that the Committee could continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements¹ and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period; endorsed the Committee's recommendations;² and requested the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate.
3. In paragraph 5 of the same resolution, the General Assembly authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-second session and thereafter.
4. In paragraph 6 of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and promoting support and assistance to meet the needs of the Palestinian people and to take the necessary steps to involve additional non-governmental organizations in its work.



5. In paragraph 7 of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation, which they have at their disposal.

6. Resolution 51/24 deals with the work programme of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat. In paragraph 2 of the resolution, the General Assembly considered that the Division for Palestinian Rights continued to make a useful and constructive contribution through the organization of seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations, as well as through its research and monitoring activities, the preparation of studies and publications, and the collection and dissemination of information in printed and electronic form on all issues pertaining to the question of Palestine. In paragraph 3, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources, including for the further development of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in the pertinent resolutions of the General Assembly, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance.

7. Resolution 51/25 deals with the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat. In paragraph 1, the General Assembly noted that several defined provisions of that programme were yet to be implemented, and stressed the importance of implementation of all provisions of the programme. In paragraph 2, the Assembly considered that the programme was very useful in raising the awareness of the international community concerning the complexities of the question and the situation in the Middle East in general, including the achievements of the peace process, and that it was contributing effectively to an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process. In paragraph 3, the Assembly requested the Department, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme for the biennium 1996-1997, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America, and indicated a set of activities to be carried out under the programme.

II. PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COMMITTEE FOR 1997

8. In the recommendations contained in its report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session,² the Committee welcomed further positive developments in the peace process. It voiced its serious concern, however, at the renewed cycle of violence in the area, delays in the implementation of the agreements reached, the prolonged closure of the territories and the resumption of the settlement policy. The Committee noted that the year 1997 would mark the thirtieth anniversary of the military occupation of the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, as well as the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption by the

General Assembly of resolution 181 (II) and expressed the view that those anniversaries should provide an impetus for intensified international action during the year.

9. The Committee reaffirmed that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement is reached on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, in particular the right to self-determination. As the organ of the General Assembly established to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee's role continues to be useful and necessary during the transitional period and until a satisfactory final settlement is achieved.

10. While remaining firm on this position of principle, the Committee has continued to make adjustments in its approach and programme of work in order to respond to the new realities on the ground and to make a concrete contribution to the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

11. In 1997, in accordance with the mandate given to it by the General Assembly, the Committee will continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the effective implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, and will mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period. The Committee will continue to cooperate with Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and United Nations system organizations in carrying out its mandate.

12. The Committee will continue to take steps to enhance its effectiveness and achieve optimal utilization of available resources in the accomplishment of its increased tasks in the light of changing political circumstances, while keeping in mind the continued financial crisis of the Organization.

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE AND THE DIVISION FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

A. Action by the Committee

13. The Committee will continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate. The Committee will also continue to monitor the situation on the ground and draw the attention of the international community to urgent developments in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, requiring international action. The Committee, through its Chairman, will continue to participate in relevant meetings of the Security Council and various intergovernmental bodies, as considered necessary.

14. The Committee will continue to expand its contacts with the Palestinian Authority and other institutions, including non-governmental organizations, in the areas under its jurisdiction. The Committee will consider inviting

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Palestinian Authority officials and other Palestinian personalities to special meetings of the Committee in order to apprise Committee members and other delegations of the important developments on the ground and the evolving needs of the Palestinian people to be met through international action. The Committee will continue to develop cooperation with and assistance to Palestinian non-governmental organizations, including participation in their meetings by the Committee or the staff of the Division. The Committee will also give consideration to the idea of sending a delegation to visit Gaza at an appropriate time.

15. Drawing on the experience of the previous year, the Committee requests the Division to continue its training programme for staff members of the Palestinian Authority aimed at providing them with better knowledge and understanding of the work and objectives of the United Nations. To achieve maximum effectiveness, the Committee requests that an internship for two officials be scheduled for a period of three months, in conjunction with the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

16. The Committee is aware of the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 51/129 of 13 December 1996, entitled "Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues" and the request addressed to the Secretary-General in operative paragraph 2 "to preserve and modernize the existing records" of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine. The Committee agrees with the statement made by the sponsors of the resolution, who expressed the wish that the electronic facilities of the Division for Palestinian Rights be used for this purpose. The Committee is prepared to consider redeploying part of its available resources towards this additional task, provided that the Division for Palestinian Rights receives the full level of staffing and financial resources, as approved by the Assembly in the current budget. The Committee requests the Secretary-General to take the necessary decision in this regard. In light of operative paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 51/23, mentioned above, the Committee requests the Division, in cooperation with the relevant offices of the United Nations, to explore the various technical and other aspects involved in the implementation of this mandate.

B. United Nations Information System on the
Question of Palestine

17. The Committee attaches the greatest importance to UNISPAL, which was originally requested by the Committee and mandated by the General Assembly in its resolutions 46/74 B of 11 December 1991 and 47/64 B of 11 December 1992, and subsequent resolutions, and stresses the need for the system to be made more comprehensive. The Committee notes that despite the welcome progress made in developing and refining the system, its requests for the electronic conversion and inclusion in the system of all significant United Nations documents, dating back to 1947, totalling some 25,000 pages, have been only partially implemented because of staffing and financial constraints. Noting that it had requested the Secretariat to secure the services of an outside contractor to carry out part of this work by utilizing savings generated in its programme of work, the Committee requests the Division to make all efforts to proceed with the implementation of this aspect of UNISPAL on an urgent basis.

18. The Committee also stresses the urgent need for further development of the UNISPAL home page on the Internet, and requests the Division to take the necessary steps in that regard.

C. Seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations

19. The Committee is of the view that seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) convened under its auspices continue to be a useful mechanism for in-depth consideration of the priority issues, and it intends to continue to structure this programme for maximum usefulness, including the possibility of co-sponsoring those meetings with academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and others.

20. Provision was made in the current programme budget for seven regional seminars, seven regional NGO symposiums, two international NGO meetings and four preparatory NGO meetings to be held during 1996-1997. In accordance with decisions taken in 1996, this programme was adjusted by providing for two meetings of consultations with non-governmental organizations during the biennium (instead of four preparatory meetings), by combining seminars, symposiums and NGO meetings, to the extent possible, and by adjusting their periodicity. It is expected that this streamlining will continue to sharpen the focus and increase the usefulness of these meetings while reducing overall expenditure. The Committee will also strive, in cooperation with prospective host countries and institutions, and the competent Secretariat services, to limit costs for conference facilities, equipment and servicing staff, while ensuring the success of the meetings.

21. Accordingly, the Committee decided to hold the following meetings in the course of 1997:

(a) Consultations with representatives of NGO coordinating committees, 3 and 4 February, United Nations Headquarters;

(b) Asian seminar and NGO symposium (Jakarta, Indonesia; date to be determined);

(c) Seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people (date and venue to be determined);

(d) North American NGO symposium, 18-20 June, United Nations Headquarters;

(e) International NGO meeting and European NGO symposium, August (date and venue to be determined).

22. With regard to other seminars and NGO meetings forecast in the budget for the biennium 1996-1997, the Committee decided, in the light of emerging priorities and concerns in its programme of work, as indicated above, as well as the continuing financial crisis of the Organization, not to hold those meetings in 1997. The Committee accordingly requested the Secretariat to ensure that the resulting savings, to the extent necessary, be used to finance the new

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activities indicated in paragraphs 14 to 16 above, as well as the further development of UNISPAL (see paras. 17 and 18).

D. Research, monitoring, and publications

23. The Committee continues to attach great importance to the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights as a centre for research, monitoring, the preparation of studies and the collection and dissemination of information on all issues related to the question of Palestine, and requests it to continue its programme of publications in consultation with the Committee. Noting increasing delays in the issuance of publications and the lack of availability of some older ones, the Committee requests the Division to take the necessary steps, in cooperation with the relevant technical Secretariat offices, to ensure that publications are issued promptly and that older ones are reprinted as necessary.

24. In accordance with existing mandates and earlier requests of the Committee, the Division's publications programme in 1997 will include the following:

(a) A monthly bulletin on activities by the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and others on the question of Palestine containing the texts of all relevant resolutions, statements and decisions;

(b) A periodic bulletin entitled Developments related to the Middle East peace process containing information on the peace process;

(c) A monthly chronological summary of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on news reports and other sources.

25. In addition, the Committee requests the Division to continue to prepare its informal periodic summary of information on significant activities of non-governmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine for the information of the Committee and for communication to the network of non-governmental organizations.

26. The Division will also issue the reports of regional and international meetings, organized under the auspices of the Committee; a special bulletin on the observance in 1996 of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; and a compilation of relevant resolutions, decisions and statements adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council in 1996. The Division will update, as needed, its information notes on the work of the Committee and the Division, on the NGO programme of the Committee, and on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

27. With regard to the studies on fundamental issues requested by the Committee, the Committee requests the Division to ensure rapid publication of the study on Jerusalem and to complete its work on the draft study on Israeli settlements.

E. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

28. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People will be observed on Monday, 1 December 1997. It is envisaged that the observance will take place at Headquarters, at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna, and elsewhere in accordance with established practice.

29. The Committee has decided, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, to prepare a special programme for the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in 1997, including an exhibit to be displayed at United Nations Headquarters during the week of 28 November to 5 December 1997, as well as to host a reception and organize other activities as appropriate.

Notes

¹ A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

² Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/51/35) chap. VII.
