

UN/SA COLLECTION
13 January 2000
Original English

**Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People****Draft programme of work for 2000****I. Mandate of the Committee**

1. The mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the year 2000 is contained in General Assembly resolutions 54/39, 54/40 and 54/41 of 1 December 1999.

2. In its resolution 54/39, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", the General Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee contained in chapter VII of its report;¹ requested it 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; 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 might 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-fifth session and thereafter. It also requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in order to mobilize international solidarity with and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to involve additional NGOs in its work. The Assembly also requested the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and other United Nations bodies to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information which they have at their disposal.

3. In its resolution 54/40, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continued to carry out its programme of work as detailed in the relevant earlier resolutions, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance, including, in particular, the organization of meetings in various regions with the participation of all sectors of the international community, the further development and expansion of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), the



preparation and widest possible dissemination of publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine, the provision of assistance in completing the project on the modernization of the records of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, and the provision of the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority.

4. In its resolution 54/41, entitled "Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat", the General Assembly requested the Department, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments, its special information programme for the biennium 2000-2001, and outlined a number of specific activities to be carried out under the programme. The Assembly also requested the Department to promote the Bethlehem 2000 project, within existing resources and until the Bethlehem 2000 commemoration comes to a close, including the preparation and dissemination of publications, and audio-visual material and the establishment of a "Bethlehem 2000" site on the United Nations Internet home page.

II. Priority issues in the programme of work of the Committee for 2000

5. The Committee has reviewed the various aspects of its own programme of work and that of the Division for Palestinian Rights, as well as of the mandates governing them. The Committee holds the view that further adjustments in this programme are necessary in order to enhance its responsiveness to the developments in the peace process and the situation on the ground, as well as its effectiveness in promoting the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

6. In its conclusions and recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, the Committee reaffirmed its strong support for the peace process and the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on permanent status issues. It expressed the hope that those negotiations would be conducted in compliance with the timetable agreed in the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, signed on 4 September 1999. The Committee emphasized that strong international consensus had emerged with respect to the need to reach a final settlement in the year 2000. The Committee also maintained that, at this crucial juncture, the international community should spare no effort in order to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, as well as peace and stability to the entire region of the Middle East.

7. The Committee believes that its mandated programme of activities has played a useful role in heightening international awareness of the question of Palestine and in sensitizing public opinion in the various regions with respect to the relevant issues. In the light of this, the Committee will continue to strive to achieving maximum effectiveness in its work programme in order to respond adequately and in a timely manner to the evolving situation on the ground and in the peace process.

8. As the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations enter a critical and delicate stage, the Committee intends to continue to support the peace process through a variety of activities. In its work, the Committee will emphasize issues relevant to the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including the right to self-

determination and statehood without external interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty and the right of return. The Committee will address some crucial aspects of a Palestinian transition to statehood, including efforts at nation-building, international assistance in support of those efforts and the economic and social development of the Palestinian people.

9. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 54/22 of 10 November 1999, the Committee will continue to support the Bethlehem 2000 project of the Palestinian Authority and will continue to work towards mobilizing broad international support for this important undertaking.

10. The Committee holds the view that the cooperation and coordination between the Department of Public Information and the Division for Palestinian Rights, in implementation of their respective mandates, should be strengthened. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/41 of 1 December 1999, requested the Department, *inter alia*, to promote the Bethlehem 2000 project through the preparation of publications and audio-visual material and the establishment of a "Bethlehem 2000" site on the United Nations Internet home page. The Division will cooperate with the Department on this new activity.

III. Activities of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights

A. Action by the Committee

11. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee will continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to participate in relevant meetings of the Security Council and the General Assembly. 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.

12. The Committee considers that its participation in high-level conferences and meetings, an important aspect of its effort to promote international support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, should be continued.

13. In cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, the Committee will continue to expand its contacts with the Palestinian Authority and other institutions, including NGOs, in the areas under its jurisdiction and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. The Committee will consider inviting Palestinian officials and other Palestinian personalities to meetings of the Committee on particular occasions, as required. Following up on the success of the Committee delegation's visit to Gaza, from 16 to 18 June 1999, the Committee will give consideration to the possibility of sending a delegation or individual members of the Committee to visit the Palestinian Territory at an appropriate time, in conjunction with one of its meetings held in the region.

14. The Bureau of the Committee will continue its consultations with countries interested in the programme of work of the Committee, including members of the European Union, with a view to promoting an understanding of its objectives and greater participation in its activities.

B. Meetings and conferences

15. In response to the important recent developments in the peace negotiations and in order to make its programme of meetings and conferences more reflective of the evolving situation, as well as forward-looking, the Committee will focus the meetings programme on support for the peace process, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, Palestinian nation- and institution-building, economic and social development and permanent status issues. The Committee will continue to review and assess the effectiveness of this programme.

16. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 54/22, the Committee in its various meetings and conferences will continue to support and promote the Bethlehem 2000 project so as to ensure international support for the project, as well as the active international participation in the millennial celebrations in Bethlehem until the completion of the project at Easter, 2001.

17. As authorized by the General Assembly, the Committee, in the past, has made adjustments in the programme in order to respond to new developments. In 2000, the Committee will continue to strive, in cooperation with prospective host countries and institutions and the relevant Secretariat services, to limit the cost of conference facilities, equipment and servicing staff, while ensuring the success of its meetings and conferences.

18. The Committee will also continue to emphasize thematic events in the course of 2000, encouraging participation by additional countries and organizations, including those which have not so far engaged fully in the programme of work of the Committee.

19. Accordingly, the calendar of meetings and conferences to be held in 2000 will be as follows:

(a) United Nations Asian Meeting on the Question of Palestine, 1 to 3 March, Hanoi;

(b) International Conference on Palestine Refugees (in cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States), 26 to 27 April, United Nations Office at Vienna;

(c) United Nations International Meeting in Support of the Peace Process, May, Athens;

(d) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, June, Cairo.

20. The Committee is grateful to the Governments of Viet Nam, Greece and Egypt for having agreed to provide venues for the above-mentioned meetings to be held in their respective capitals.

C. Cooperation with civil society

Non-governmental organizations

21. The role of civil society organizations in educating their respective constituencies about the fundamental issues of the question of Palestine and in mobilizing public support for the Palestinian cause remains very important. Aware

of the challenges that lie ahead, the Committee is particularly appreciative of those NGO contributions that are focused on mobilizing international solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for the achievement of its inalienable rights, as well as supporting the peace process and the work and objectives of the Committee. There is a greater need for sustained campaigns aimed at informing public opinion and promoting national and international action in support of the peace process, the effective implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements, and of a just and lasting peace in the region. The Committee believes that, in 2000, NGOs should focus their efforts on areas relevant to the permanent status issues, namely Jerusalem, settlements and refugees. The Committee also takes the view that it is important for the NGOs to continue to support the peace negotiations and promote the need for the conclusion of an agreement on the permanent settlement in September 2000. Promoting varied assistance to the Palestinian people in nation-building and economic and social development should be another important area of NGO work.

22. The Committee intends to continue its practice of inviting civil society organizations to all international conferences and meetings organized under its auspices. It will encourage them to use these events as a platform for discussing their initiatives and campaigns, and for bringing forward their views and ideas on the issues at hand. The participation of Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in those events provides civil society with a unique opportunity to support and strengthen, in particular, such positions and initiatives that are geared towards the realization by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

23. The Committee encourages cooperation, coordination and networking among civil society organizations. It will maintain and develop its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms accredited to it, in addition to the already established liaison with a large number of individual NGOs. It will continue the accreditation of new NGOs and their umbrella organizations and asks the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue and intensify outreach efforts directed at civil society. Periodic meetings and consultations with NGO representatives will contribute to further review and enhancement of the Committee's programme of cooperation with NGOs.

24. The Committee takes the view that regular exchange of information with the NGO community on respective initiatives and the various current and planned activities and their results is crucial to its cooperation with civil society. The Committee encourages the accredited NGOs to keep the Committee abreast, on a regular basis, of major NGO activities and campaigns in support of the Palestinian people. In this connection, the Committee requests the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue to develop its Internet site on NGO activities on the question of Palestine (www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo) as a central tool for the exchange of information and communication between the United Nations and civil society. Meetings of the Committee, as well as its international conferences and meetings, can also be used by NGOs to present results of major initiatives and campaigns on the question of Palestine.

25. In the course of the year, the resources available for cooperation with NGOs on the question of Palestine will be used to implement the following:

(a) Organization, wherever appropriate and feasible, of meetings of NGOs in conjunction with international conferences and meetings held under the auspices of the Committee;

(b) Periodic consultations with representatives of NGOs, parliamentarians and inter-parliamentary organizations;

(c) Participation of representatives of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in significant conferences, meetings or other events organized by NGOs and other civil society organizations;

(d) Providing Palestinian organizations with assistance in sending their representatives to meetings held under the auspices of the Committee or meetings organized by other civil society organizations;

(e) Periodic visits by members of the Committee and staff of the Division to the territory under the control of the Palestinian Authority to brief local NGOs and institutions on the work of the Committee and to assess those of their needs that can be met through the Division's programme of work.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

26. The Committee strongly believes that the role and contribution of national parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations in shaping public opinion and formulating policy guidelines is important for upholding international legitimacy in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee attaches great importance to developing further cooperation with parliaments and representatives of inter-parliamentary bodies in order to encourage discussion of the current peace process and the various aspects of the question of Palestine within the respective parliaments and among all the layers of society. To that end, the Committee intends to involve parliamentarians and representatives of inter-parliamentary organizations in its international conferences and meetings. Consultations between the Committee and representatives of parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations, held during international events to be organized by the Committee, could serve as a starting point for enhanced cooperation between the two sides.

27. Through this programme of cooperation with civil society, the Committee intends to improve its relationship with the various organizations active on the question of Palestine and make it more effective and focused.

D. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

28. The Committee has requested the Division for Palestinian Rights to make an effort to complete, in the course of the year, the development of UNISPAL, an activity mandated by the General Assembly in 1991. This work should include entry into the system of additional documents, improvement of the quality control and user-friendliness of the system and the further development and management of "UNISPAL" and "Question of Palestine" sites on the Internet.

29. The Committee requests the Division for Palestinian Rights to take the necessary steps towards completing its work on the project of modernizing the records of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and to make an

effort to complete the current work stage at the end of the first trimester of 2000. The Committee holds the view that the study on the political and legal aspects of the work of the Conciliation Commission, undertaken by a consultant, should be completed within the same time period.

E. Other activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights

Publications

30. The Committee considers that the Division for Palestinian Rights should continue to prepare and issue in a timely manner its periodic publications, namely:

- (a) Monthly bulletin on action by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;
- (b) Periodic bulletin on developments in the peace process;
- (c) Monthly chronological summary of events relating to the question of Palestine;
- (d) Annual compilation of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council;
- (e) Reports of meetings and conferences held under the auspices of the Committee;
- (f) Annual bulletin on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

31. In addition, the Committee requests the Division to continue to prepare its informal periodic summary of information on significant activities of NGOs relevant to the question of Palestine for the information of the Committee and for communication to the network of NGOs.

32. The Committee believes that the Division, in consultation with the Bureau, should review the existing studies and information notes prepared by the Division and make proposals with regard to those that require updating.

Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

33. The Committee considers that this useful programme, carried out in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, should be continued in 2000. The Committee considers that the experience of the previous years of the training programme should be evaluated, in consultation with the Mission, and used in such a way as to maximize the programme's effectiveness and usefulness for Palestinian Authority trainees.

Observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

34. 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 Wednesday, 29 November 2000. It is envisaged that the observance will take place at United Nations Headquarters, at the United Nations offices at Geneva and Vienna and elsewhere in accordance with established practice.

35. The Committee will again commemorate this anniversary with a solemn meeting and other activities. During the week beginning 27 November, a Palestinian cultural exhibit will be presented at United Nations Headquarters in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations.

36. The Committee will continue to review and assess its programme of work in the light of new developments in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations and the situation on the ground, and will make adjustments as necessary.

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/54/35).*
