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## Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

### Draft programme of work for 2003

#### 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 2003 is contained in General Assembly resolutions 57/107, 57/108 and 57/109 of 3 December 2002.

2. In its resolution 57/107, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", the General Assembly expressed its appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly and took note of its annual report,<sup>1</sup> including the conclusions and recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof; requested the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and authorized it to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it might consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session and thereafter. The Assembly also 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 General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate. It furthermore requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity 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 civil society organizations in its work. The 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 had at their disposal. In addition, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all competent bodies of the United Nations, and urged them to take the necessary action, as appropriate.



3. In its resolution 57/108, 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 on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People 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 documents collection 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, and the provision of the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority.

4. In its resolution 57/109, entitled "Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat", the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information, 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 might be required by developments, its special information programme for the biennium 2002-2003, and outlined a number of specific activities to be carried out under the programme.

## **II. Priority issues in the programme of work of the Committee for 2003**

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. It will continue to make adjustments in this programme in order to enhance its responsiveness to developments in the peace process and the situation on the ground, as well as to raise its effectiveness in promoting the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

6. In its conclusions and recommendations to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, the Committee reiterated its position that the continuing Israeli occupation remained at the core of the conflict and must be addressed without further delay. It also expressed the firm belief that the solution to the question of Palestine should be achieved on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and other relevant resolutions, the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and the coexistence of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace, within secure and recognized borders. The Committee stated that it would continue to work towards this objective by carrying out its General Assembly mandate. Through its programme of activities in 2003, the Committee will continue to contribute to international efforts aimed at bringing peace to the region.

7. Pending a political settlement, the parties will need assistance in steering away from escalating violence and confrontation. With this in mind, the Committee will continue to stress the importance of the international community's involvement in peacemaking efforts. In this context, the Committee reiterates its position that the United Nations should maintain its permanent responsibility with respect to all aspects of the question of Palestine until it is resolved in a satisfactory manner, in

conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions, in accordance with international legitimacy and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized. The Committee firmly believes that the international community could also play a more active role in ensuring that Israel, the occupying Power, abides by its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949.

8. The Committee is of the view that its programme of activities, mandated by the General Assembly, has continued to make a valuable and positive contribution to heightening international awareness of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State. Aware of the dangers posed by the continuing Israeli settlement construction in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, the Committee will emphasize the importance of ceasing all settlement activities and reversing them in order to create conditions conducive to the resumption of the political process. The Committee will also strive to work with maximum effectiveness in order to respond adequately and in a timely manner to the rapidly evolving situation on the ground, while promoting a constructive analysis and discussion of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and mobilizing international assistance to the Palestinian people.

9. At this especially difficult period, the Committee stresses the need to support the Palestinian people and the political process through a variety of activities. In the course of the year, the Committee will pay special attention to the current tragic situation on the ground and to the importance of redressing it by putting an end to the illegal policies and practices of the occupying Power, such as the settlement activity and various measures of collective punishment. The Committee will maintain its support for efforts at restoring the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, including through the Quartet and the continued engagement of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. At a time when the Palestinian people are facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, the Committee will remain engaged on issues relating to the state of the Palestinian economy and the urgency of providing international emergency relief and assistance to the Palestinian people.

10. The Committee attaches great importance to enhancing the cooperation and coordination between the Department of Public Information and the Division for Palestinian Rights, in implementation of their respective mandates. In its resolution 57/109, the General Assembly requested the Department, inter alia, to expand its collection of audio-visual material on the question of Palestine and to continue the production and preservation of such material. The Committee took note of the important work carried out by the Department in the conversion and remastering of United Nations films and videos on the question of Palestine covering the period 1947-2000. The Committee will continue to cooperate with the Department in this regard. The General Assembly also requested the updating of the exhibit in the Secretariat.

### **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 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, through its Chairman, will continue to participate in relevant intergovernmental and other conferences and meetings, as necessary. The Committee considers this activity an important aspect of its work in the promotion of international support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

13. In cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, the Committee will continue to maintain contacts with the Palestinian Authority and other institutions, including civil society, in the areas under its jurisdiction and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. Following the practice of the previous years, the Committee will continue to invite Palestinian officials and other Palestinian personalities to meetings with members and observers of the Committee and the Secretariat, as required.

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 understanding of its objectives and greater participation in its activities.

#### **B. Meetings and conferences**

15. The Committee intends to focus its international meetings programme on the steadily deteriorating situation on the ground and the critical importance of putting an end to Israel's illegal policies and practices, including the settlement activity, as well as on restoring the political process between the two sides with a view to ending the occupation and achieving a final settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee will continue to advocate the need for international protection of the Palestinian people living under occupation, and sensitize public opinion worldwide to the necessity of providing the vitally important emergency relief and rehabilitating the badly damaged Palestinian economy.

16. In 2003, the Committee, in cooperation with prospective host countries and institutions and relevant Secretariat services, will do its utmost to ensure the success of its programme of meetings and conferences. In so doing, it will keep in mind the need for economy and the most cost-effective utilization of resources. The Committee will also continue to make an effort to encourage participation by countries and organizations which so far have not engaged fully in its programme of work.

17. Accordingly, the Committee intends to organize the following meetings in 2003:

- United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People
- United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace, May, Kyiv. The Meeting will be followed by an NGO event in support of the Palestinian people
- United Nations Regional Meeting for Asia and the Pacific on the Question of Palestine
- United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, September, United Nations Headquarters

18. The Committee is grateful to the Government of Ukraine for having agreed to provide the venue for the aforementioned meeting in its capital.

### **C. Cooperation with civil society**

#### **Civil society organizations**

19. The Committee will continue to encourage the important work done by civil society in support of the Palestinian people in the region and worldwide. The Committee believes that in its work with civil society organizations special emphasis should be placed on mobilizing wide public support for measures aimed at protecting the Palestinian people and providing relief and various forms of assistance. The Committee will seek greater engagement on the part of such sectors of civil society as academic institutions and think tanks, parliamentarians and the media. Its cooperation with the international network of NGOs on the question of Palestine will be intensified on the basis of the new guidelines for accredited organizations.

20. 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 own initiatives and campaigns, and for bringing forward their views and ideas on the issues at hand. The participation of Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in those events should provide civil society with a unique opportunity to support and strengthen its positions and initiatives geared towards the realization by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

21. The Committee encourages cooperation, coordination and networking among civil society organizations. It will maintain and further 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 will ask the Division to intensify its outreach to civil society. Periodic meetings of consultations with civil society representatives will contribute to the further enhancement of the Committee's programme of cooperation with NGOs.

22. The Committee is of the view that regular exchange of information with the NGO community on respective initiatives and the various current and planned activities and their outcomes are crucial to its cooperation with civil society. The recently adopted new guidelines for accredited NGOs, which clarify entitlements and responsibilities and request, inter alia, periodic reports on their activities with regard to the question of Palestine, should enhance the interaction between civil

society and the Committee. The Committee requests the Division to continue to develop and regularly update its Internet web site on NGO activities on the question of Palestine<sup>2</sup> as a central tool for the exchange of information and communication between the United Nations and civil society.

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

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

(b) Participation of representatives of the Committee and the Division in important forums and other events worldwide organized by NGOs and other civil society organizations;

(c) Periodic meetings of consultations with various civil society organizations with a view to briefing them on the activities of the Committee and assessing their needs that can be met through the Division's programme of work;

(d) Providing assistance to Palestinian organizations in sending their representatives to meetings held under the auspices of the Committee or supported by the Committee.

#### **Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations**

24. The Committee strongly believes that the role and contribution of national parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations in shaping public opinion and formulating policy guidelines constitutes an important source of upholding international legitimacy in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee reaffirms the continuing importance of developing closer cooperation with parliaments and representatives of inter-parliamentary bodies in order to encourage the discussion of ways of supporting peace in the Middle East and resolving the question of Palestine within the respective parliaments and among all strata of society. To that end, the Committee will strive to involve parliamentarians and representatives of inter-parliamentary organizations in international conferences and meetings organized under its auspices. Consultations between the Committee and representatives of parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations, to be held at international events sponsored by the Committee, should improve cooperation between the two sides.

### **D. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine**

25. The Committee has requested the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue its work on further development, expansion and administering of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, including the "UNISPAL" and "Question of Palestine" sites on the Internet. The Division will focus on making the collection comprehensive, up to date and user-friendly.

## **E. Publications programme**

26. The Committee considers that the Division's publications programme contributes to heightening international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine, involvement of the United Nations in the issue, and the work of the Committee, its mandate and objectives. The Division should continue this important activity and issue its periodic publications, as follows:

- Monthly bulletin on action by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine
- Periodic compilation of documents and other material on developments related to the Middle East peace process
- Monthly chronological review of events relating to the question of Palestine
- Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine
- Reports of international meetings and conferences held under the auspices of the Committee
- Annual bulletin on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
- "NGO Action News", a bimonthly summary of information on civil society activities on the question of Palestine

27. The Committee believes that the Division, in consultation with the Bureau, should continue to review the existing publications, make proposals with regard to those that require updating and prepare up-to-date publications for, and under the guidance of, the Committee.

## **F. Other activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights**

### **Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority**

28. 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 2003. The Committee considers that the experience of the previous years of the training programme should be evaluated, in consultation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine, and used in order to maximize the programme's effectiveness and usefulness for Palestinian Authority trainees.

### **Observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

29. 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 2003. It is envisaged that solemn meetings in observance of the Day will take place at United Nations Headquarters, at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna, and elsewhere in accordance with established practice.

30. The Committee will again commemorate this anniversary with a solemn meeting and other activities. During the week beginning 1 December, a Palestinian

exhibit will be presented at United Nations Headquarters in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations.

31. The Committee will continue to review and assess its programme of work in the light of the situation on the ground and new developments in the political process, and will make adjustments, as necessary.

*Notes*

<sup>1</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No.35 (A/57/35).*

<sup>2</sup> [www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo](http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo).