

**General Assembly**

Sixty-first session

Official Records

Distr.: General
16 November 2006

Original: English

Second Committee**Summary record of the 17th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 20 October 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Intelmann. (Estonia)**Contents**

Agenda item 40: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

Agenda item 55: Globalization and interdependence (*continued*)

- (a) Globalization and interdependence (*continued*)
- (b) International migration and development (*continued*)
- (c) Culture and development (*continued*)
- (d) Preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets, in particular to the countries of origin, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption (*continued*)
- (e) Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 40: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (A/61/67-E/2006/13)

1. **Ms. Tallawy** (Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia), introducing the report transmitted by the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/61/67-E/2006/13), said that it had been prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in cooperation with a number of concerned United Nations entities, and was submitted in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/51 and General Assembly resolution 60/183. The report clearly indicated that the social and economic situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to deteriorate, as Palestinians struggled to survive in an environment of mounting hardships.

2. Palestinian deaths and injuries resulting from Israel's disproportionate use of force and extrajudicial killings were increasing. Arbitrary arrests and detentions continued, while over 9,000 Palestinian political prisoners remained in Israeli prisons. The destruction and confiscation of property persisted. Israel's restrictions on mobility and closure policies had severed access by Palestinians to health and education services, employment, markets and social and religious networks. Despite some easing of closure, Palestinian movement in the West Bank remained problematic. Access to the Gaza Strip remained closely linked to security incidents. Continued construction of the barrier in the West Bank, which contravened international law and General Assembly resolution ES-10/15, further restricted Palestinian access and movement. Adding to the plight of the Palestinians was the growing network of Israeli settlements.

3. Such measures had condemned the majority of the Palestinian population to a life of poverty and deprivation. Unemployment and poverty rates remained high, and malnutrition and other health problems afflicted a growing number of Palestinians. If the current political and economic conditions continued,

coupled with the occupation, the future looked bleak for the Palestinians. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Palestinian economy could shrink to levels that had not been witnessed for a generation.

4. On the occupied Syrian Golan, the report documented the fact that, as of 2005, Israeli settlers were occupying 33 settlements, of which 27 were primarily agricultural. The Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan was generally unable to travel to the Syrian Arab Republic, and had experienced increasing limitations on land use because of military and environmental zoning restrictions imposed by Israel. A large number of the Syrian Arab population had lost significant acreage traditionally used for pasture, resulting in changing production, commercial and land-use patterns within a traditionally rural society.

5. Recent events in the Middle East, including the war in Lebanon, the continuation of the conflict and the suffering of the Palestinian and Syrian populations under occupation, underscored how interconnected the region's problems were and how military solutions only complicated, as well as further destabilized, an already precarious situation. The only path forward was a negotiated settlement that would achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based on relevant United Nations resolutions and international law.

6. **Mr. Hijazi** (Observer for Palestine) said that the ESCWA report described just a few of the illegal practices of the Israeli occupation force against the Palestinian people and their natural resources. It would be useful if the next report could include a paragraph on the disaggregated total losses sustained during 39 years of occupation.

7. **Mr. Muffadal** (Sudan) said that unfortunately the report had not contained any specific proposal for ending the suffering of the Palestinian people and the Arab population of the Occupied Golan. The continuation of Israel's inhuman practices made it impossible to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan. The continuing Israeli occupation demonstrated the inability of the international system to deal with the humanitarian crisis, and did nothing to prevent others from engaging in such occupation.

8. **Ms. Tallawy** (Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia) replied that a paragraph providing the disaggregated total losses

sustained during 39 years of occupation could easily be incorporated in the next report, along with some analysis. As for the point raised by the representative of the Sudan, the solution had been proposed at the end of her introduction: the only way forward was a negotiated settlement that would achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based on relevant United Nations resolutions and international law.

9. **Mr. Al-Ghanim** (Kuwait), thanking the Executive Secretary for her briefing, said that the report had made no mention of pollution from Israel's nuclear reactor.

10. **Mr. Edrees** (Egypt), noting that the report contained disturbing information, expressed concern about the consequences of the Israeli occupation for the environment, and the need for practical ways of helping to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people.

11. **Ms. Tallawy** (Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia) said that the issue raised by the representative of Kuwait was of concern to all the people of the region. ESCWA was merely following its mandate and had in the past requested information on the matter from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); it had received none. If delegations wanted more information on the issue in future reports, ESCWA would follow whatever mandate it was given; at present, it depended on information provided by United Nations entities working on the spot.

12. **The Chairperson** invited the Committee to engage in a general discussion on the item.

13. **Mr. Hijazi** (Observer for Palestine) said that the devastation wrought on the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan by 39 years of Israeli occupation had consequences for future generations. The Palestinians, already humiliated and oppressed by living under a ruthless military occupation, watched helplessly as their land, water and other natural resources were plundered before their eyes. They were forced to live alongside their occupiers' untreated hazardous waste and garbage, tolerate its stench and suffer its life-threatening consequences.

14. Israel continued to construct its illegal wall and to expand its illegal settlements in the West Bank in open defiance of Security Council resolutions and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice

(ICJ) of July 2004. To justify its illegal actions, Israel presented the international community with a host of carefully crafted pretexts, using the ruse of security considerations to justify its unrelenting violations of international law and disdain for Palestinian rights and resources. Israel's actions on the ground exposed those false pretexts. Its illegal wall would de facto annex approximately 46 per cent of the West Bank's most valuable water resources and at least 10 per cent of its most fertile land. Some 41 Israeli settlements in the Jordan Valley alone consumed the equivalent of three quarters of the water used by the entire Palestinian population of the West Bank for domestic and urban purposes. The illegal wall and settlements also impeded Palestinians from gaining access to education, health and other vital services. In the past year, access to UNRWA-contracted health-care facilities in occupied East Jerusalem had decreased by 18 per cent, and newborn mortality now accounted for three quarters of all Palestinian infant deaths. Poverty was officially estimated to affect 62 per cent of the Palestinian population, and current GDP was 25 per cent lower than in 1999.

15. The environment was another victim of Israel's abuses of Palestinian natural resources. In the West Bank, the illegal settlements drained and dumped liquid, as well as hazardous and untreated chemical waste, on Palestinian lands. Israel had also impeded Palestinians from undertaking proper solid waste management in the West Bank, and had annulled their plans to establish proper dumping sites. Tons of garbage were transferred and disposed across the Green Line to the West Bank, specifically to sites that were close to four water wells serving the Nablus area. Such action was a flagrant violation of international environmental law, especially the 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, which Israel had signed and ratified. One year after Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the menace of Israeli settlements remained in the form of piles of debris, twisted metal, asbestos and concrete, posing a grave danger to residents' health and the environment. Israel had wilfully defied its obligations under international law by not cleaning up the hazardous debris and by impeding the clean-up activities that had been supposed to start immediately following its withdrawal.

16. The violations were neither involuntary nor unavoidable; they were neither exaggerations nor

allegations; they were part and parcel of the documented and systematic policy of creating the prosperity of one people at the expense of another. Violation by Israel of the Palestinian people's permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources must be neither tolerated nor treated with laxity. Member States must assume their responsibilities under international law, upholding their permanent responsibility in the question of Palestine until it was resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner on the basis of international legality. That was a legal and moral responsibility of the utmost urgency.

17. **Mr. Alzaabi** (United Arab Emirates) said that the Palestinian people continued to suffer from a humanitarian crisis as a result of the ongoing Israeli occupation, hostile Israeli policies and Israeli war crimes against them. Israel continued to make incursions into Palestinian cities, killing civilians, demolishing houses and infrastructure, and destroying farm land; to control borders and trade passages, restricting the movement of people and goods, dividing Palestinian lands and blockading cities; to follow its expansionist policy, building the separation wall and settlements, and confiscating Palestinian land; and to seize and pollute water sources. According to a number of recent reports, as a result of the Israeli occupation over two thirds of Palestinians lived below the poverty line; over 40 per cent were unemployed; and half of all children suffered from malnutrition and did not enjoy basic education. In the occupied Syrian Golan, meanwhile, Israel continued to confiscate land and build settlements, reducing land in Arab possession to a mere 6 per cent. It had also been imposing a policy of discrimination and oppression against the Arab population, restricting movement between the Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic, disconnecting families, and denying individuals employment and education opportunities.

18. Reaffirming his delegation's solidarity with the Palestinian people and Government and its support for their right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, he urged the international community to redouble its efforts and compel Israel to implement all international resolutions concerned with the Palestinian question and the Middle East. He also urged the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, to compel Israel to stop its aggression against the Palestinian people and Arab populations and their properties immediately; to resume peace negotiations,

according to the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map; and to heed the July 2004 ICJ advisory opinion. Moreover, Arab populations in the occupied Arab territories should be compensated for all the losses they had endured as a result of Israeli aggression. Lastly, he called on the international community, in particular the international financial institutions, to resume the provision of assistance to the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian people, to enable them to meet their basic needs and build their economic and social institutions, until the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem.

19. **Mr. Makri** (Malaysia) said that the ESCWA report had been submitted to the Economic and Social Council in July and was itself dated 3 May 2006; it might therefore be out of date. For example, it did not mention the latest developments in the areas under consideration, most notably the Hamas victory in the July Legislative Council elections, which had resulted in a cessation of aid, which in turn had exacerbated the already critical situation in Palestine. Malaysia hoped that the formation of a national unity Government would lead to an overall improvement in conditions in Palestine. The report also failed to reflect how much the Palestinian people had suffered since June 2006, when Israel had launched its still ongoing offensive in the Gaza Strip.

20. It was clear from the report that the occupation of the Palestinian territory had deepened the economic and social hardships of the Palestinian people; that the closure system was the main cause of both poverty and the deepening humanitarian crisis; and that Israel continued to confiscate Palestinian land and water resources, in violation of the Geneva Conventions and other international laws and norms, and alter the facts on the ground. While the present situation in Palestine was dire, Malaysia was equally concerned about the long-term economic and social situation. He mentioned, in particular, the impact of the barrier on subsistence and movement; the negative impact of Israeli settlements on natural resources and the environment; and the effect of demographic growth on GDP per capita and unemployment.

21. The issue of the permanent sovereignty of Palestine over its natural resources and the Middle East question in general required a comprehensive solution. To that end, Malaysia had called on the United Nations to convene an international conference on the Middle East in order to discuss a comprehensive, just and

durable peace plan, based on relevant United Nations resolutions. Malaysia's support for the Palestinian people had been deep and abiding. For example, it had contributed \$16 million to supplement the budgets of 16 Palestinian governorates and, in response to Israel's offensive in Gaza, had convened a special meeting of the Extended Executive of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Putrajaya in August 2006.

22. There could be no peace in the world until the situation in the Middle East was resolved. The international community had a responsibility to act as a catalyst and a neutral broker in such efforts. Malaysia stood ready to play its part.

23. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the ESCWA report was one of many United Nations reports that had documented the unprecedented toll of the occupation on resources and humans. Daily death, injury and imprisonment affected men, women and children alike. The occupation authorities continued to damage the Palestinian people's natural resources by levelling land, uprooting trees and destroying crops and wells. The Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 had even accused the United Nations of being complicit in the economic coercion being applied to the Palestinian people through its membership in the Quartet and the Security Council's failure to take measures to protect human rights. Meanwhile, Israel continued to build its racist separation barrier, which would turn what was left of Palestinian territory into one giant prison like the former Bantustans of South Africa.

24. The ESCWA report also showed that Israel had turned large portions of agricultural land in the Golan into closed military areas. It was stealing large quantities of floodwaters and had recently started excavations for a dam near the area of separation at Quneitra, which constituted a violation of both international law and the 1974 Disengagement Agreement, and against which the Syrian Arab Republic would defend its interests by all possible means. Israel was levying taxes of up to 50 per cent on Syrian citizens' produce, laying mines near civilian areas, and burying nuclear waste in occupied Syrian territory. Israeli law continued to be applied to Syrian residents of the Golan in contravention of Security Council resolution 497 (1981) which had declared Israel's annexation of the Golan to be null and void. The Israeli Prime Minister had recently asserted that the Golan

was an integral part of Israel, and none of the States which were usually so quick to support Security Council resolutions condemning particular States had issued any condemnation of that statement. Delegations should support the resolution to be adopted under agenda item 40 as an expression of principled opposition to occupation, whichever the occupying Power.

25. **Mr. Al-Muharraqi** (Bahrain) said that the ESCWA report showed how Palestinians and Syrians suffered under Israeli occupation and how their resources were being drained despite repeated United Nations resolutions such as General Assembly resolution 60/183. Israel continued to construct the racist separation barrier in the West Bank and around Jerusalem in disregard of international resolutions and the ICJ advisory opinion ruling that barrier to be illegal. The Israeli Government's own map of the barrier showed that a large segment of it extended around Maale Adumim and nearby settlements, causing severe damage to Palestinian infrastructure and property. The report also showed that Israel and its settlers were using over 80 per cent of the water from West Bank aquifers while most Palestinian farms were left to rely on rainwater, that settlers and the armed forces were discharging waste on the West Bank while Israeli closures hindered Palestinian waste management projects, and that pollution from dismantled settlements was posing a hazard in the Gaza Strip. Economic growth in occupied Palestinian territory lagged well behind its potential.

26. In the Syrian Arab Golan, the Arab population had been incorporated into the Israeli system. That population suffered from increasing military and environmental zoning restrictions, and had lost a large amount of traditional pasture land, leaving it dependent on Israeli dairy products.

27. He stressed the importance of a just and comprehensive peace based on the Arab peace initiative, internationally recognized resolutions and the principle of land for peace.

28. **Mr. Al-Suleem** (Saudi Arabia) said that the ESCWA report showed that Israeli occupation measures were contrary to the principles of international human rights law, all revealed religions and international conventions. Israeli practices fuelled extremism, terrorism and the cycle of violence by depriving Palestinians of a future. The King of Saudi Arabia had put forward the peace initiative adopted by the Arab Summit in Beirut.

Saudi Arabia had provided material support to the Palestinian people and had called on the international community to urge Israel to release funds owed to the Palestinian people and to facilitate the assistance work of United Nations agencies. The time had come to abandon the illusion that bombs, missiles and collective punishment could solve international problems and to apply international law and the principles of justice.

29. **Mr. Edress** (Egypt) said that the ESCWA report had documented the increasing number of deaths, injuries and arrests in the occupied territories. Land was being confiscated for construction of the West Bank barrier that had been condemned by General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 (2004), trees and crops were being destroyed, and closures and restrictions on movement had increased poverty and deprivation. Israeli forces had destroyed wells, while Israel and its settlers used over 80 per cent of the water from West Bank aquifers, leaving most Palestinian farms dependent on rainfall. Israel had ignored the General Assembly's call not to dispose of waste, including untreated chemical and nuclear waste, in occupied Palestinian territory. The Palestinian economy was suffering, and the unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Gaza had not given rise to the hoped-for economic revival there.

30. The report also showed the increasing suffering of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan due to Israeli restrictions and the continued dispersal of families on either side of the line of disengagement. The report's facts and figures were distressing, but Egypt would not lose its faith in peace, and called on all parties to work for a peace that was permanent, comprehensive, and not based on any double standard.

31. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia) said that, while the rest of the world was preoccupied with development, in particular the Millennium Development Goals, the Palestinians continued their daily struggle just to survive. Their attention was focused on escaping violence and their right to a homeland was not fully respected. Israel's prolonged occupation of Palestinian territory continued to deepen the economic and social hardships of Palestinians. Nobody could survive if their access to health and education services, employment, markets and humanitarian assistance was severely restricted.

32. Until those issues were fully addressed, the deep sense of anger was unlikely to subside. The solution was to stop denying the economic, social and political

rights of the Palestinian people. His delegation had repeatedly called for the national unity and territorial integrity of the Palestinian people, including East Jerusalem, to be preserved and the freedom of movement of persons and goods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory — to and from both East Jerusalem and the outside world — to be guaranteed. The inalienable rights of both the Palestinian people and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan to all their natural and economic resources must be fully respected. The international community must rededicate itself to achieving peace in the Middle East and to creating a viable and sovereign Palestinian State, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative. The United Nations and its agencies were also indispensable in alleviating the plight of the Palestinian people. Indonesia was ready to strengthen the Palestinians' capacity to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, in cooperation with the international community.

33. **Mr. Al-Ghanim** (Kuwait) said that the ESCWA report clearly demonstrated that Israel's arbitrary measures and disproportionate use of force were the principal causes of the deteriorating economic, social and health conditions in the occupied territories. Israel's destruction of Palestinian infrastructure, seizure of property, exploitation of natural resources, closure policies, and continued construction of the separation barrier were all contrary to international law as embodied in the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, United Nations resolutions, and the ICJ advisory opinion declaring the West Bank barrier illegal. Palestinians were deprived of the most basic freedoms, let alone the possibility of realizing the Millennium Development Goals. Palestinian unemployment was as high as ever and the poverty rate was well over 50 per cent. The Israeli army had uprooted trees, levelled land and destroyed water sources. According to the World Bank, Palestinian economic performance lagged well behind its potential, and outside aid was being obstructed. Women and children were bearing the brunt of that unsustainable economic situation, and also accounted for a sizable share of the death, injury and imprisonment perpetrated by the Israeli Army and settlers. In the occupied Syrian Golan as well, Israel had seized land, appropriated water resources and isolated the Arab population from their mother country. The report's conclusions only highlighted the need for

a just and comprehensive peace in the region, which could be achieved only by Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories and by granting to the peoples in those territories their full rights under international law.

34. **Mr. Zoubi** (Jordan) noted from the report that the Israeli occupation, illegal settlements and the separation wall had a direct negative effect on the economic and social lives of the people under Israeli occupation. It was ironic that, while the whole world was working to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, one country was systematically and deliberately working to undermine the attainment of those Goals by people under its occupation. Such policies had a dangerous spillover effect on poor desperate young people that might threaten countries outside the region.

35. Recalling the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel and the Oslo Agreement between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, he emphasized the need to achieve and maintain a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on the international terms of reference of the peace process, the Arab Peace Initiative and the two-State solution envisaged in the road map. Israeli practices hindered peace and had a serious negative effect on the road map. The dangerous consequences of such policies were exacerbated by Israel's continued defiance of United Nations resolutions. In that regard, he called on Israel to cease all settlement activities in the occupied territories; to stop the construction of the separation wall; to return the properties it had seized; and to pay compensation for damage incurred.

36. **Mr. Benfreha** (Algeria) said that the report made it quite clear that the Israeli occupation was the primary cause of the Palestinian people's worsening socio-economic situation and that Israel's deliberate policy was the cause of the poverty and humanitarian crisis in the occupied Arab territories.

37. The devastating effects of armed conflicts must not be forgotten when discussing development issues. The Palestinian people continued to suffer the agony of occupation and unwarranted collective punishment, while Lebanon had been caught up in an unjust war imposed by Israel.

38. It was clear from the report that Israel persisted in its policy of arbitrary detentions, disproportionate use of force, destruction of infrastructure, mobility

restrictions, closures, and confiscation of Palestinian land and water resources for settlements. The construction of the barrier, meanwhile, was a blatant violation of the Geneva Convention and the fundamental rules of international law, and went against the will of the international community, as expressed in the July 2004 ICJ advisory opinion. The closure by Israel of crossings for the transfer of goods contravened global trade norms and had a significant impact on the Palestinian economy.

39. More than ever, the international community must honour its commitments to the Palestinian people and the population in the Golan, reaffirming their inalienable right to their natural resources and thereby allowing them to enjoy sustainable development.

40. **Mr. Manor** (Israel) said that Israel had a vested interest in improving the Palestinian economy, for the benefit of both sides. Progress was dependent on a stable security situation and on cooperation from the Palestinians and the international community. It was therefore fitting that all parties should act in a manner that would advance economic cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians and that important economic interests should not be sacrificed to political considerations.

41. Economic cooperation could not continue while the Hamas Government pursued its policy of terror against Israeli citizens. Income from Palestinians employed inside Israel had dropped drastically, owing to the fact that the Palestinian Authority had been turning a blind eye to acts of terrorism, releasing convicted terrorists from prison, and allowing illegally armed militias to engage in armed violence against Israel with impunity.

42. The one-sided ESCWA report totally ignored the dramatic increase in attempts to perpetrate terrorist attacks inside Israel, since the departure of the Israel Defense Forces from the Gaza Strip. Not only had the Hamas Government been actively involved in terrorist actions, it had assisted other terrorist groups in carrying out attacks against Israel. The report also failed to recognize that the sole aim of current Israeli military operations was to have a recently abducted soldier returned and to prevent the continuation of terrorist attacks from Gaza against Israel and its citizens.

43. The report had mentioned the security fence several times, while deliberately ignoring the reasons

for its construction. The fence was designed to prevent terrorists from carrying out attacks in Israel and did not annex any territory to Israel. A large majority of the Palestinian terrorist attacks committed since September 2000 had emanated from the West Bank. Israel had been searching for ways to prevent the infiltration of terrorists and the decision to build a security fence had been taken only after other options had failed. With respect to the fence and water issues, most of the water wells in the West Bank were on the eastern side of the fence and thus were not affected, while those located west of the fence were continuously in operation.

44. As regarded the closure of border crossings, the Erez and Karni crossings had been built to increase economic cooperation between Israel and Palestine, not as a gateway for terrorist infiltrations or smuggling of weapons and explosives into Israeli territory. The only reason certain crossings were sometimes closed was to prevent terrorist organizations from perpetrating acts of terror against the Israeli population. Hamas had a longstanding plan to attack the largest goods crossing in Gaza and was therefore directly responsible for the hardships stemming from the closure of the crossings.

45. Israel had been collaborating with other countries and international organizations to help the Palestinians achieve the Millennium Development Goals. However, no positive progress could be made without peace and goodwill on the part of all concerned. Terrorist attacks were never justified and were particularly tragic when the disputed issues could have been settled through negotiations.

46. **Mr. Hijazi** (Observer for Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Israel could not defend his country's actions against the Palestinian people's rights and resources. With respect to accusations of imbalances in the report, the facts had been corroborated in independent international reports as well as Israeli reports.

47. One year after Israel's departure from Gaza, the Palestinian people continued to suffer mentally and physically from relentless and often indiscriminate bombing and shelling campaigns from air, land and sea. They were even being tormented by terrifying sonic booms at low altitudes, which had been condemned by human rights organizations as war crimes.

48. Israel stood alone in its defence of the construction of its expansionist wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. The international community endorsed the ICJ advisory opinion that the wall was illegal and that Israel's claims of security needs were insufficient and irrelevant. The Court had also held that no military necessities or national security requirements could justify the breaches of the Palestinians' rights caused by the routing of the wall. The Israeli Government itself had admitted that the planned route was political. It was therefore time for the occupying Power to stop defending the indefensible and face its responsibilities, in accordance with international law.

49. It would be interesting to know how the Israelis were planning to improve the economic situation of the Palestinians and, for that matter, achieve peace and security. In the presence of terrorism by telephone, shelling and sonic booms, house demolitions, razing and confiscation of lands, one might well ask who was the real terrorist.

50. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that a number of United Nations resolutions deplored the tragic situation in the occupied Palestinian territory as well as Israel's violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. The Israelis apparently did not understand that their actions were indefensible and that the era of advocating the advantages of occupation had come to an end. It was time for Israel to respect the various United Nations resolutions and international treaties and cease its occupation of the Palestinian territory and the Syrian Golan.

Agenda item 55: Globalization and interdependence (*continued*) (A/61/486)

(a) Globalization and interdependence (*continued*) (A/61/286)

(b) International migration and development (*continued*) (A/60/871; A/61/73, 91, 170, 187, 230, 315, 316, 321, 343, 345, 346, 506 and 515; and A/C.2/61/2)

(c) Culture and development (*continued*) (A/61/86 and 321 and A/61/378-S/2006/761)

(d) Preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets, in particular to the countries of origin, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption

(continued) (A/61/177)

(e) Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy *(continued)* (A/61/93, 126, 181 and 269)

51. **Mr. Motoc** (Romania) welcomed the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development as well as the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a global forum on international migration and development.

52. Migratory patterns involving Romania were expected to change significantly as the country became integrated into the European Union. Migration from Romania was slowing down, while migration to the country was likely to increase. As a country of both transit and origin, Romania was currently strengthening national migration legislation to provide adequate migrant, refugee and victim assistance and protection. It was also developing a new national migration policy that incorporated international best practices adapted to the country's specific conditions. Finally, it had devised a series of strategies aimed at ensuring full compatibility with the existing structures and measures for illegal immigration control in the European Union.

53. The fight against organized crime was being waged in close cooperation with the competent authorities of the other European countries. The Romanian Government had signed numerous agreements on international police cooperation and readmission and was actively working on the preparation of passports incorporating biometric markers. It had also established partnerships with neighbouring countries to prevent and combat illegal migration, smuggling and trafficking in human beings.

54. If properly managed, migration could contribute to development in the countries of destination, transit and origin. Romania stood ready to participate in all dialogue and to cooperate at the bilateral, regional and global levels.

55. **Mr. Diallo** (Guinea), addressing the question of international migration and development, said that his delegation agreed in general with the analysis and

proposals in document A/60/871. Sending, transit and receiving States, in a spirit of shared responsibility, should incorporate in their development policies and programmes measures to ensure a sustainable response to the issues involved in international migration. He listed a number of those measures, noting that States should, in particular, ensure that migrants moved mainly through legal channels; protect the rights of migrants; prevent the exploitation of migrants, especially those in vulnerable situations; combat smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons; and facilitate the repatriation of migrants in a manner respectful of their human dignity.

56. At the international level, a framework based on co-development goals could lead to novel initiatives to promote the beneficial effects of international migration. To that end, the potential of national diasporas as engines of and added value for development and cooperation should be explored and developed, and should be taken into account in poverty reduction strategies and national development policies and programmes. His Government had established innovative financing mechanisms, particularly by channelling resources raised through co-development and decentralized cooperation towards financing for development. The international community should develop realistic and pragmatic solutions in order to make migration promote development cooperation. By managing migration in a harmonious and mutually beneficial manner, the international community could forcefully reaffirm its will to take resolute action against poverty, persecution, rejection and stigmatization, and to promote consensual political and operational dialogue on international migration.

57. Guinea's long tradition of tolerance towards migrants explained the importance it attached to establishing closer links between migration and development. A national forum on co-development and decentralized cooperation to be held in Conakry, Guinea, in March 2007 would bring together national development actors, technical and financial partners and representatives of the Guinean diaspora for the purpose of developing policies, strategies and instruments to mobilize the additional financing necessary to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

58. **Ms. Jusufaj** (Albania), addressing the question of globalization and interdependence, said that integration was a priority for her Government, not only in order to

consolidate its identity as a democratic country operating in the free market, but also as a step forward in the process of globalization. Her delegation agreed with the recommendation in document A/61/286 that special emphasis should be placed on improving national educational systems at all levels, particularly with respect to science and technology. Recognizing the value of information and communication technologies for socio-economic development, her Government had adopted strategies to increase the use of information technology in Albania.

59. Turning to the question of international migration and development, she said that evidence of the potential mutual benefits of migration for countries, such as sharing of experience and building partnerships, was increasing. Her Government, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, had launched a programme to engage the Albanian diaspora in the scientific, administrative and economic development of her country.

60. With regard to the question of preventing and combating corruption, she said that, although the economy of Albania operated within the framework of free market principles, corruption and bureaucratic procedures had been the main obstacles to the creation of a favourable climate for foreign investment. To address those problems, her Government had ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption and was working to incorporate its provisions into its domestic legal system. Measures were in place to encourage and reward whistleblowers in corruption cases, and considerable progress had been made in advancing the rule of law.

61. The fight against extralegality aimed to provide poor and disadvantaged groups with the means to become stakeholders in the formal economy and was an essential component of her country's process of integration with Europe. Additional steps Albania was taking to attract FDI and promote its integration with Europe and the world economy included ensuring macroeconomic stability and advancing institutional reforms.

62. The accession of her country to membership in WTO and the signature of the Stabilization and Association Agreement had led to the conclusion of free trade agreements between Albania and the countries of South-Eastern Europe, and the establishment of a free trade area was on the horizon.

63. In conclusion, she conveyed her Government's appreciation to the international community for its ongoing support of her country's efforts to integrate into the world economy and achieve sustainable development.

64. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu Aguirre** (Mexico) underscored the importance of the integrated approach which the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development had taken to the many complex issues involved in dealing with the subject. Moreover, as the Dialogue had made clear, inasmuch as most countries were simultaneously sending, transit and receiving States, they must adopt coherent policies and a coherent vision of migration as a potential force for co-development, which brought short-, medium- and long-term benefits to sending and receiving countries alike.

65. His delegation supported the proposal to continue the dialogue on international migration and development in a global forum under United Nations auspices. The forum's work should ultimately enable Member States to take comprehensive decisions on the issues involved. The experience of regional organizations and consultative processes should be taken into account, and participation should be open to all relevant organizations within and outside the United Nations system, as well as to representatives of civil society and the private sector.

66. **Mr. Sadykov** (Kazakhstan), addressing the question of globalization and interdependence, said that, given the major role of science, technology and education in enabling countries to enhance national competitiveness and achieve sustained economic growth and development, it was vitally important to strengthen international cooperation in the field of science and technology for development.

67. The primary objective of his country's innovation effort was to use new technologies to ensure sustainable economic growth, develop high-technology enterprises and mitigate environmental and social problems. He described a number of major initiatives his country had taken to promote science and technology and said that his Government provided substantial assistance to university students.

68. With regard to the question of international migration and development, his delegation believed that migration, if properly managed, offered considerable potential for the development of sending,

transit and receiving countries. In 2006 Kazakhstan had launched the first pilot campaign in the Commonwealth of Independent States to legalize illegal migrant workers. It was a party to bilateral treaties and multilateral conventions which protected the rights of migrants directly or indirectly and worked closely with international organizations and United Nations agencies.

69. As to the question of preventing and combating corruption, his delegation agreed with the conclusion in document A/61/177 that good governance and the establishment and strengthening of the national apparatus in line with the principles of integrity, transparency and accountability were of paramount importance for achieving sustainable development and economic growth. He described various measures his Government had adopted to prevent and combat corruption.

70. With regard to the question of the integration of the economies in transition into the world economy, he said that his country had been totally transformed by the structural reforms it had been carrying out since independence. The World Bank had included Kazakhstan among the top 20 most attractive economies for investment, and negotiations on his country's admission to WTO were in the final stages.

71. The issues covered by the agenda item under consideration had a significant impact on economic development and well-being for developing countries and developed countries alike, and proper collective management of the issues was essential if Member States were to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and their future generations were to prosper.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.