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Chairperson: Mr. Lundberg (Vice-Chairperson) (Finland)

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In the absence of Ms. Ochir (Mongolia), Mr. Lundberg (Finland), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 60: 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/65/72-E/2010/13, A/65/486, A/65/520, A/65/542 and A/65/545-S/2010/558)

1. **Mr. Nour** (Director of the United Nations Regional Commissions, New York Office), introducing the note 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 East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/65/72-E/2010/13), detailed the economic and social hardships resulting from the Israeli occupation.

2. The report testified to the great human suffering caused by Israeli military and security measures and the general treatment of the Palestinian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In addition, investment had been undermined, leading to a decline in the private sector's ability to create jobs and widespread poverty, reflected in a high level of food insecurity. In the occupied Syrian Golan, Syrian citizens continued to suffer in their everyday lives from Israeli occupation; they similarly lacked employment opportunities and had only restricted access to land and water.

3. He recalled General Assembly resolution 64/185 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2009/34, which had requested the report. The General Assembly had reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian population and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan. The Economic and Social Council had called for the lifting of the restrictions imposed on the Palestinian people, including those resulting from ongoing Israeli military operations and the closure system, and for other measures to be taken as a matter of urgency to alleviate the desperate humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Implementation of those two resolutions still fell far short of what was required.

4. **Mr. Jawhara** (Syrian Arab Republic) reaffirmed the importance of the report and the need to discuss the situation of the Palestinian population at each session of the General Assembly. Previously, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) had introduced the report and had thus given permanent delegations the opportunity to take up directly the issues raised. He regretted the discontinuation of that practice. He also regretted the lack of any indication in the report of practical solutions to the problem of non-compliance with United Nations resolutions and hoped that future reports would rectify that omission.

5. **Mr. AlHantouli** (Observer for Palestine) said that he shared the concerns expressed by the Syrian Arab Republic. It would be desirable to revert to previous practice with regard to the ESCWA report, including the distribution of a handbook on all the relevant United Nations resolutions. A visual presentation would also be useful, as in the past, to help delegations to form a clear idea of Israel's violations and their repercussions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

6. It would be useful if, instead of showing separately the number of Palestinian victims in Gaza and the West Bank, the report gave the total number of victims, which could subsequently be broken down by area. He asked whether ESCWA had any detailed information regarding the extent of Israeli violations of the Palestinian people's right to their natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; he also wished to know the cut-off date of the report.

7. **Mr. Nour** (Director of the United Nations Regional Commissions, New York Office) said that the new Executive Secretary of ESCWA had been unable to attend the meeting as she had been appointed just a few days previously. He would convey to her the speakers' wishes and observations. He did not have any information other than that contained in the report, which did not go beyond 10 March 2010.

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

9. **Mr. AlHantouli** (Observer for Palestine) said that, in 43 years of Israeli occupation, the Palestinian people had been deprived of their inalienable rights as a result of the heinous crimes committed against them, including attempts to evict them forcibly from their land. Their water had been appropriated, their environment polluted and their harvest destroyed by

the settlers, who were seeking to take their place. Such actions continued to be in violation of international standards and laws.

10. Land was the mainstay not only of the Palestinian economy but also of the food security of the Palestinian people, most notably through olive growing. Just recently, during the olive-harvesting season, attacks by Israeli settlers had been escalated against Palestinian farmers under the protection of the occupation forces: trees had been uprooted and burned, crops had been stolen and agricultural land had been flooded with wastewater. Environmental pollution by Israel also included the dumping and burial of toxic waste by factories established in illegal Israeli settlements. Moreover, Israel's aggressive and unlawful settlement campaign was continuing to be conducted at the expense of the lives, livelihoods and natural resources of the Palestinian population. In the areas of the West Bank where demolitions and confiscations had occurred, economic and service projects could be established that would have a positive impact on the economy and development of the Territory. In the Gaza Strip, the continuing illegal blockade had exacerbated the food insecurity of the Palestinian population by holding up necessary food and agricultural supplies and preventing fishing activities.

11. The separation wall, maintained by Israel in defiance of international law, prevented many Palestinians from having access to water resources and grazing land, while more than 500 Israeli military checkpoints were still hindering all aspects of life in the West Bank. The occupying Power was thus continuing to deprive the Palestinian people of their right to sovereignty over their water and natural resources. In the West Bank, huge quantities of water were taken from the Palestinian population for the use of Israeli cities and illegal settlements; in the heavily populated Gaza Strip, the only source of water left was not fit for drinking and required huge processing facilities in order to meet people's needs. So long as Israel's illegal practices remained unchecked, and in particular its systematic exploitation of Palestinian natural resources, tens of thousands of Palestinians would continue to be without any livelihood.

12. Member States had a responsibility to compel Israel to comply with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, which affirmed the rights of the Palestinian people, and those of the Arab people in the occupied Syrian Golan, to permanent

sovereignty over their natural resources. The credibility of the international system as a whole would be undermined if Israel were allowed to continue its illegal practices with impunity.

13. **Mr. Al-Fayez** (Saudi Arabia) said that even a casual observer grasped the gravity of the violent situation resulting from Israel's continued occupation of Arab territory in the Middle East. The Palestinian people suffered from arbitrary detentions, an excessive use of force, house demolitions, the uprooting of trees, severe restrictions on movement and closure policies, all of which made it difficult for them to obtain access to services and strangled the Palestinian economy. Aid agencies had stopped trying to send aid to the Gaza Strip, where the blockade had led to a severe shortage of basic necessities. Meanwhile, Israel continued building new settlements and expanding existing ones, seizing Palestinian land, consuming water resources and polluting the environment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Syrian Golan. Those actions hindered development, modernization and reform in a region that ought to play a key role in civilization.

14. His country stood beside its brother Arabs in affirming the commitment to peace. While a just and comprehensive peace was possible if all parties shouldered their responsibilities, international players must change how they dealt with the conflict and Israel must, at the very least, end the daily suffering of the Palestinian people and halt settlement building and the construction of the racist separation wall, which violated international law and United Nations resolutions and made it difficult for any Palestinian Government to operate or convince the people that peace was a possibility.

15. **Ms. Handaruningrum** (Indonesia) said that it was deplorable that foreign occupation continued to impede the development of a number of countries and territories. The Palestinian and other Arab peoples continued to suffer at the hands of the occupying Power, with the occupation continuing to cause socio-economic hardships and to limit those peoples' development prospects and access to their natural resources, particularly owing to the failure to extend the moratorium on settlement construction in the West Bank. The Palestinian people's capacity to enjoy their right to development continued to be eroded by Israel's construction of a separation wall, water and food insecurity, mobility restrictions and closure policies,

including access to humanitarian assistance. In that respect, the international community must take concerted action towards fulfilling the commitments set out in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in accordance with international law, and eliminate obstacles to the full enjoyment of the rights of peoples living under foreign occupation.

16. For its part, Indonesia would help to train 1,000 Palestinians in various fields in the period from 2008 to 2013, and had contributed to the humanitarian relief of the civilian population in the Gaza Strip.

17. **Mr. Aloumi** (Kuwait) said that the challenges to development and the social situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were regrettable. The Israeli military forces had conducted arbitrary arrests and forced displacements of Palestinian people, killing them in the thousands in military operations from 2009 to mid-2010. Israel also had total control over most of the water resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It drew water from there to supply Israeli cities and sold the surplus to Palestinians.

18. Turning to the occupied Syrian Golan, the Government of Kuwait reaffirmed its support for Security Council resolution 497 (1981), which determined that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration over that region was null and void and without international legal effect. Kuwait was committed to the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut in 2002, with a view to reaching a just and comprehensive peace, as well as Israel's total withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan.

19. **Mr. Al Shehhi** (United Arab Emirates) said that Israel's illegal policies and practices only increased the despair of the Palestinian people and undermined opportunities for peace in the region. International reports showed that Israel's policies and measures since its occupation of Palestinian territory in 1967 had resulted in more than 75 per cent of families in Gaza and 47 per cent of families in the West Bank living below the poverty line, in addition to an unemployment rate of 42 per cent. Some 38 per cent of the population, mostly in Gaza, lacked food security. Another result was low levels of school enrolment. Poverty was expected to increase because of the closure policy and

severe restrictions on movement, which prevented access to places of work and the supply of development and humanitarian aid.

20. Israel's military aggression against the Gaza Strip between February 2009 and February 2010 had led to the death and injury of thousands of civilians, mostly women and children, with thousands being made homeless and the destruction of urban and agricultural infrastructure. Local revenue losses amounted to some 80 per cent of the gross domestic product of the Gaza Strip. Some 60 per cent of Gazans were without electricity, hundreds of thousands were without water and destruction of the sewage network had caused environmental pollution. The blockade imposed by Israel since 2007 had greatly aggravated the economic and humanitarian situation.

21. Israel continued its illegal policy of settlement expansion and its attempts to impose facts on the ground by constructing the illegal separation wall, building settlements on occupied Palestinian land and bulldozing agricultural land and wells. The separation wall extended for more than double the length of the Green Line, with 87 per cent of it inside the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, in violation of the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. Some 40 per cent of the West Bank had been seized for Israeli settlements. Israel's continued excavations threatened to undermine al-Aqsa Mosque and its seizure of Palestinian property in East Jerusalem sought to alter the city's historic character and identity, in contravention of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israel continued to occupy the Syrian Golan, confiscate land and natural resources, build settlements and follow a policy of discrimination and repression against the Arab population, all of which was designed to Judaize the region and change its Arab character.

22. His country supported the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to their natural resources and to establish an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital, as well as Syria's right to recover the occupied Golan. It therefore called upon the international community to put pressure on Israel to cease its policy of aggression; lift the blockade on Gaza immediately; withdraw fully from all occupied Arab territory in Palestine and the Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 and from the remaining Lebanese occupied land, in accordance with the principle of land for peace, resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab

Peace Initiative; halt the construction of settlements and the separation wall; dismantle existing settlements and end Israeli practices against the holy places in East Jerusalem. Furthermore, the recommendations of the Goldstone report (A/HRC/12/48) must be adopted and the principles of international law applied to those responsible for war crimes against civilians in Gaza. The international community and international financial institutions must also provide assistance for reconstruction to the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people.

23. **Mr. Nkombela** (South Africa) said that, year after year, the overwhelming majority of Member States had recognized the Palestinian people's continued suffering at the hands of Israel. That suffering had been exacerbated by the blockade of Gaza, which was a violation of international humanitarian law and contrary to the will of the international community; it was also particularly harmful in the current context of global crises. The Palestinian people, like all other peoples, had a right of access to their natural resources. Restrictions on the Palestinians' access to water, combined with their isolation resulting from the separation wall, poverty and food insecurity, could not but be a cause of concern to the international community, especially in view of its recently renewed commitment to the alleviation of poverty and hunger worldwide. International assistance was needed to enhance the Palestinian Authority's public sector institutions and build on its reform and development plan.

24. South Africa, for its part, together with India and Brazil, had pledged \$3 million to Palestine, including \$1 million for projects in Gaza, in the hope of contributing to the development of conditions conducive to peace talks. It remained concerned about Israeli control over inflows of goods, particularly building materials, into Gaza. Moreover, recognizing the important role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), as the main provider of basic services to refugees in the area, South Africa called for further support for UNRWA institutional strengthening, through the provision of sufficient financial resources.

25. The Israeli siege had caused undue suffering to the ordinary people of Gaza and had created a need for relief efforts. South Africa therefore called on Israel to allow inflows into Gaza of essential food items, medicine and building materials and to create an

environment conducive to peaceful negotiations with a view to the establishment of a fully independent and viable Palestinian State, based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel.

26. **Mr. Daoud** (Sudan) noted that Israel continued to subject Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan to the most brutal forms of repression and aggression. Israel imposed restrictions not only on the movement of people and goods, but also on the operations of aid agencies, thereby hindering the supply of aid to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Israeli closure policy had led to an increase in poverty, with economic and social life degraded further by land seizures, settlement building and construction of the separation wall. The latter had turned Palestine into one big prison, in violation of international law pursuant to the advisory opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice on 9 July 2004, and had divided the West Bank into dozens of isolated cantons.

27. Israel consumed 91 per cent of the West Bank's water resources, leaving the Palestinians with 9 per cent for their own needs. Those actions, together with Israel's seizure of agricultural land for settlement construction and its restrictions on imports and exports, had deprived the Palestinians of food security. Public health had also deteriorated due to the lack of a regular fuel and electricity supply. The threat of landmines further degraded the living conditions of the Arab population.

28. His delegation was anxiously monitoring Israeli violations of international law and human rights, which had led to the collapse of Palestinian infrastructure and the deterioration of economic and social conditions. It therefore called upon the international community to compel Israel to respect human rights and to comply with resolutions of international legitimacy.

29. **Mr. Jawhara** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the ESCWA report shed new light on the economic and social suffering of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and Syrian citizens in the occupied Golan, including the exploitation and squandering of their natural resources.

30. Crimes of genocide committed by Israel included the economic blockade of 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza which had resulted in a severe shortage of the

basic necessities of life, preventing reconstruction and halting the supply of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

31. Israel, the occupying Power since 1967, had applied its own laws in the occupied Syrian Golan, in violation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981), which had determined Israel's annexation of the Golan to be null and void. Israel had constructed and expanded settlements in the Golan, seized Syrian-owned land, uprooted fruit-bearing trees, bulldozed agricultural land and damaged the environment by burying nuclear waste there.

32. Israel also drew water from Lake Masada in the occupied Syrian Golan and sold the bulk of it to settlements at reduced prices, with only small amounts for sale to Syrian farmers at inflated prices, causing \$20 million in losses to the Syrian inhabitants, with a further loss of \$10 million expected by the end of the current year. Such actions were part of Israeli policies designed to deprive the local population of natural resources, in contravention of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and Security Council resolution 465 (1980).

33. The item under consideration was one of the core issues of the Second Committee, whose recommendations should send a clear message to the entire world that the occupation was a violation of all international norms and laws. His delegation rejected the position of some States, which spoke at length about human rights at international gatherings but objected strongly to any mention of the suffering and human rights violations of those living under Israeli occupation. Although the General Assembly might be unable to enforce its resolutions on the Israeli occupation, that did not diminish their importance. States should not shirk their moral responsibility towards those living under foreign occupation and the United Nations should take all necessary measures to compel Israel to implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), put an end to the occupation and compensate the Palestinian and Syrian inhabitants for their losses.

34. **Mr. Lakhal** (Tunisia) affirmed the principled and firm position of Tunisia in support of the full rights of the Palestinian people, the establishment of a Palestinian State and the recovery of all occupied Arab land, including the occupied Syrian Golan. The international community's efforts to achieve the MDGs by the target date of 2015 should extend to those two regions, which had among the worst social, economic

and environmental conditions in the world as a result of the Israeli occupation.

35. Most United Nations reports had established that the Palestinian economy faced grave challenges and that the international community must shoulder its humanitarian responsibilities towards the Palestinian people. Perhaps the most significant challenge was the system of restrictions on the movement of the Palestinian population, including the separation wall and the hundreds of roadblocks which made it difficult for Palestinians to reach their places of work and obtain access to health services.

36. The ESCWA report recorded the worsening economic situation in Gaza, due to the impact of the blockade, the destruction of property and the impossibility of reconstruction. The unemployment rate had risen to 42 percent, compared with 32 per cent before the blockade. Some 80 per cent of families lived below the poverty line in Gaza, which had the highest level of poverty in the world, and 45 per cent suffered the same fate in the West Bank. There was also a lack of food security, according to a recent World Health Organization report.

37. Israeli occupation policies had led to the collapse of several Palestinian institutions, families being made homeless and the confiscation of land upon which farmers depended for their livelihoods. What was happening in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan was the responsibility of the entire international community, which must do more to end the occupation. The international community must also help to build a productive base in the occupied territories to end dependency on foreign aid and the Israeli economy, in preparation for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. Furthermore, the international community must promote justice and international law in order to achieve peace in the region and enable Palestinians and Syrians in the occupied territories to exercise legitimate sovereignty over their natural resources.

38. **Mr. Jiménez** (Nicaragua) said that more than 60 years of Palestinian resistance, coupled with a criminal economic blockade, had forced the Palestinian people to endure subhuman conditions. The Government of Israel had created an economy of occupation, particularly in the Gaza Strip, through its illegal occupation of land and natural resources, denial of the right to free movement and destruction of

infrastructure. Furthermore, the wall being constructed by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was a mass crime against innocent people.

39. The people in the Gaza Strip could not devote themselves fully to their economic and social development when their prime concern was to survive shelling by the Israeli army. There was no point in discussing sustainable development and economic growth when a people under military occupation had no control over their own land, water or other natural resources, and were denied access to their basic rights to health, education and water.

40. Nicaragua, which had itself experienced foreign occupation and aggression at various times in its history, as well as the stagnation of its economy and development, reaffirmed the legitimacy of the struggle of the Palestinian people and its resistance to the Israeli occupation until it could have an independent, sovereign State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

41. The first step towards achieving the sustainable economic development of the Palestinian people was to ensure compliance with the resolutions that condemned Israel and obliged it to recognize the self-determination and sovereignty of Palestine. Nicaragua supported the Palestinian nation and people and condemned the State of Israel's violation of international law and United Nations resolutions and its expansionary and genocidal policies and practices against the Palestinian people that made terrorism part of their daily lives.

42. **Ms. Al-Hadid** (Jordan) said that development was difficult to achieve in Palestine due to the current political situation and Israel's total control over Palestinian resources and the economy. Israeli policies had led to a grave deterioration in all aspects of Palestinian life. The MDGs were another victim of those illegal policies.

43. Numerous studies had shown that the growing numbers of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem were a primary source of environmental pollution, in the form of untreated sewage, drilling for ground water and the removal of large areas of plant cover. Israeli policies such as expulsions, house demolitions, the burning of agricultural land, the looting of olive harvests and land seizures, together with collective punishment, blockades and closures, represented a blatant challenge to international agreements and United Nations resolutions and were designed to undermine

opportunities for peace in the region. Poverty, unemployment and food insecurity were rising and prospects for economic growth remained poor, given the restrictions on the movement of people and goods in the occupied territories and the continuing blockade of Gaza.

44. Her delegation therefore called for the cessation of all measures aggravating the situation in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the occupied Syrian Golan and urged the international community to continue to provide the necessary assistance to the Palestine Authority and Palestinian people. Development was linked to the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, the establishment of an independent State and sovereignty over their territory and resources.

45. **Mr. Al-Horr** (Qatar) said that his delegation agreed with all peace-loving delegations that it was essential to enable the people under Israeli occupation to exercise their right to development, security and other fundamental human rights.

46. By continuing to build the apartheid wall in blatant violation of humanitarian values and international law, Israel was in effect seeking to annex parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory which contained critical resources, including fertile land and water. The United Nations had confirmed that Israel's use of water in the territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, and the geographical and demographic changes Israel had carried out there constituted a flagrant violation of article 47 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, resolutions of the Security Council on both the Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan and the advisory opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice in 2004.

47. The Palestinian people continued to face severe restrictions on movement, including because of the construction by Israel of approximately 500 security barriers and the illegal, inhumane and immoral blockade that it imposed on 1.5 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip in order to harass the population, strangle their economy and drive them off their land, in contravention of international humanitarian law. Furthermore, the expansion by Israel of illegal settlements, which had been condemned by global consensus, international law and United Nations resolutions, harmed the environment and disrupted daily life. A case in point were the savage crimes perpetrated by heavily armed Israeli settlers against

unarmed civilian Palestinians, including the destruction of fruit trees.

48. The international community and international human rights and humanitarian organizations must immediately redouble their efforts to prevent the continuation of such violations. Perpetrators must be punished in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and relevant international law and resolutions.

49. As an Arab and peace-loving nation, Qatar regularly provided economic assistance to the Palestinian people in such areas as education, health and the payment of salaries, and also hosted relevant international conferences.

50. **Mr. Kurer** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the ESCWA report showed that Israel's recourse to killings, expulsions, blockades and the use of terror against Palestinians had increased. The Israeli regime had no regard for international law and the United Nations was unable to enforce its resolutions aimed at ending the occupation, preventing the destruction of vital Palestinian infrastructure or stopping Israel from using prohibited weapons.

51. The occupying Power continued to murder, imprison and expel; to demolish homes, destroy residential areas and bulldoze fields; and to seize water resources, expropriate agricultural land and impose blockades and closures. The purpose of those actions, which caused economic, social and psychological damage in the occupied territories, was to starve the Palestinian people and to force them to relinquish their rights, including the right of return.

52. The ESCWA report affirmed that the occupying Power had continued to tighten its grip on the Palestinian people. Between February 2009 and February 2010, more than 100 Palestinians had been killed by the occupation forces and 1,545 had been injured. The separation wall broke the contiguity of Palestinian areas and prevented people from reaching their places of work. The separation of Palestinian land from water resources, particularly if a permit was needed to reach the land, could lead to a loss of 53.8 per cent of olive production and cause many farmers to leave their land. When completed, the wall would isolate East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank and make access to everyday services more difficult, especially as the military occupation authorities had declared the areas between the wall and the Green Line to be closed.

53. Such policies had serious economic and social repercussions. The blockade had restricted transfers of cash from the West Bank to Gaza, halting private sector investment there. Repeated Israeli incursions in the border areas had caused serious damage to agricultural land and the water grid. The offshore area in which fishing was permitted had been reduced to only three miles. That had led to economic collapse, high levels of unemployment and widespread poverty. It was refugee women and children who bore the greatest burden, suffering from malnutrition, disease and a lack of health care.

54. The occupation authorities continued to refuse to allow the Golan population expelled in 1967 to return. Settlements continued to be built in the Golan Heights, lands bulldozed, fruit-bearing trees owned by Syrian Arabs uprooted and the marketing of their produce obstructed. The occupation authorities also controlled water resources, thereby severely restricting the agricultural activity of Syrian inhabitants.

55. Affirming the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the right of return of the refugees, his delegation called upon the international community to shoulder its moral and historical responsibility to support the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. It also called for the Israeli occupation authorities to pay compensation for the economic and social damage caused in all the occupied Arab areas.

56. **Mr. Khalil** (Egypt) said that the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan continued to suffer greatly from the policies and practices imposed by Israel. Israeli military operations had led to the killing of many Palestinians, the demolition of Palestinian-owned properties and population displacement.

57. Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip and its practices in the West Bank, including its closure policy and multiple checkpoints, were seriously undermining reconstruction and economic recovery, aggravating the humanitarian situation and denying Palestinians access not only to their natural resources, including land and water, but also to basic social services, employment and markets. Israel was also continuing to confiscate Palestinian land for military purposes or for the expansion of existing settlements and the construction of new ones.

58. Israel was continuing to build the separation wall in the West Bank, in defiance of General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The wall isolated the Palestinians from their land and deprived them of their sovereign rights over the land and its accompanying resources, in particular, water, thereby causing great hardship.

59. Furthermore, the ongoing occupation by Israel of the Syrian Golan, which had been deemed null and void and without international legal effect by Security Council resolution 497 (1981), continued to affect the lives and human rights of the Syrian citizens living there.

60. The international community must act without delay to compel Israel to terminate the policies that it had imposed on the Palestinian people and on Syrian Arabs in the occupied Syrian Golan and also to respect its obligations under international law, in particular humanitarian law, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and relevant decisions of the United Nations. Furthermore, Israel must end its occupation of Arab lands; alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan; compensate them for the damage that it had caused; and recognize their right to sovereignty over their natural resources.

61. **Ms. Davidovich** (Israel) said that the sole purpose of the item under consideration was to single out and condemn one Member State, Israel, thereby enabling members of the Committee to score cheap political points. Israel shared with its neighbours the same vital interests and was prepared to cooperate with them through a variety of existing mechanisms, including joint capacity development programmes on agriculture and food security, forestry, desalination and water management. Moreover, and despite continued Hamas terrorist attacks launched from the Gaza Strip, her Government had decided to liberalize the conditions under which civilian goods were allowed into the area and to expand inflows of materials for building schools and hospitals, improving water quality and developing sewage systems; however, materials having a dual usage continued to be banned.

62. Although the Hamas terrorist organization continued to rule in Gaza, Israel had authorized scores of civilian projects in the area, which it was implementing in conjunction with the United Nations

and other partners for the well-being of Palestinian civilians. She urged Member States to join in partnering such projects. As for the situation in the West Bank, the World Bank had reported over 8 per cent growth in the Palestinian economy there in the previous year, while the security measures in place were regularly reviewed. She deplored the annual discussion on an unbalanced report which did not further the Palestinian cause or contribute to a better understanding between the parties.

63. **Mr. AlHantouli** (Observer for Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the daily suffering of the Palestinian people and the systematic destruction of their natural resources deprived them of their sovereignty. The item under discussion would continue to be on the Committee's agenda for as long as Israel's intolerable occupation of the Palestinian territory continued.

64. Many reports by specialized agencies described in detail, and with supporting figures, the catastrophic economic consequences of Israeli practices, which hindered the Palestinian people from living a normal life. Many international reports on Gaza had called for the immediate lifting of Israel's blockade, and it was the State of Israel that was responsible for conducting terrorist acts by denying more than 1 million Palestinians in Gaza their fundamental human rights recognized under international instruments.

65. **Mr. Jawhara** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the issue under consideration remained an important item on the Committee's agenda, and the fact that the delegation of Israel was alone in accusing Committee members of politicization reflected its isolated position in the international community. The statement by the representative of Israel reflected a political position based on non-compliance with international law and the failure to implement United Nations resolutions. It was an attempt to mislead the international community and public opinion and distract attention from the fundamental issue of the ongoing Israeli occupation of Arab territory. The agenda item on the Israeli occupation would remain on the Committee's agenda until Israel ended its occupation of Arab lands and implemented all relevant United Nations resolutions.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.