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**President: Mr. Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA  
(Algeria).**

**AGENDA ITEM 108**

**Question of Palestine (continued)**

1. Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from Russian*): The delegation of the German Democratic Republic has already, during the general debate, welcomed the effort aimed at bringing about a political settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, which continues to threaten international peace and security.

2. The position held by the German Democratic Republic as a matter of principle is that such a settlement should, first and foremost, mean the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the Arab lands occupied in 1967 and also the restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine, in order to bring about a just and lasting peace in that part of the world. We were therefore in favour of including in the agenda of the present session of the General Assembly a specific item entitled "Question of Palestine".

3. The delegation of the German Democratic Republic considers it to be not only perfectly legitimate and natural but also necessary for the sole legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine—that is, the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO]—to participate in the discussion of this agenda item.

4. As the representative of the German Democratic Republic, which has always been and will continue to be on the side of the Arab peoples in their just struggle against persistent Israeli aggression, I should like to declare from this rostrum here and now that we fully support the PLO in its arduous and just struggle to ensure that the people of Palestine exercise their legitimate rights. The slander of the Israeli representatives against the PLO is simply a desperate effort to distract attention from Israel's continuing aggression against neighbouring Arab States and shows that Israel is still not inclined to acknowledge the rights of the Arab people of Palestine.

5. On the basis of the experience we have gained in long years of friendly relations with the PLO, we know that that organization is a consistent defender of the interests of the Arab people of Palestine. This

belief of ours is in accordance with the statements made by the USSR and other States belonging to the socialist community, the decisions taken by the Sixth Arab Summit Conference held at Algiers in November 1973, the Second Islamic Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government held at Lahore in February 1974, and the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity [OAU] at its eleventh session, held at Mogadiscio in June 1974, all of which recognized the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine.

6. To have the representatives of the PLO participate in the discussions of the General Assembly would be in accordance with the demands that peoples exercise their right to self-determination, a right which is one of the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter. The rights of the representatives of the PLO to participate in the discussion is also dictated by the principle that all parties concerned have the right to participate in discussing matters which directly affect their interests.

7. It is a matter of paramount urgency, as we see it, that the work of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, held at Geneva, be speedily renewed and that the representatives of the Arab people of Palestine be given their rightful place at that conference as well.

8. A discussion of the Palestine question in the plenary Assembly, with the participation of the representatives of the PLO, will encourage the taking of political steps to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on the legitimate interests and rights of all peoples of that area.

9. Mr. MALIK (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Soviet Union, guided by the position which it holds as a matter of principle regarding the Palestine question and regarding the question of a settlement in the Middle East as a whole, supported the proposal of a group of Arab States Members of the United Nations to the effect that at its twenty-ninth session the General Assembly should discuss the Palestine question [A/19742 and Add.1-4].

10. The problem of Palestine occupies a key place in the over-all range of questions relating to the political settlement to be reached in the Middle East. For more than 25 years the Arab people of Palestine has been deprived of the exercise of its inalienable right to self-determination, which has been acknowledged and confirmed by numerous decisions taken by the United Nations. The reason for this is the aggressive policy of Israel and the position of those international imperialist and Zionist forces who, throughout this time, have been giving patronage to Israel and who

have supported Israeli expansionism in the Middle East.

11. Despite the fact that the United Nations more than 25 years ago recognized the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine to national existence, self-determination, State independence, security and an independent development, and that respect was due for its historical and cultural personality and the implementation of national aspirations in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations on an equal footing with all other peoples in the Middle East and the entire world, up till now the Arab people of Palestine has had no opportunity to be heard in the United Nations and in the plenary sessions of the General Assembly.

12. This situation is particularly anomalous because the problem of settling the situation in the Middle East is something which is actively and systematically discussed in the United Nations, and because this international Organization has now, for more than a quarter of a century, been immediately concerned with the settlement of the Middle East question.

13. The Soviet delegation whole-heartedly supports the proposal that the representatives of the Arab people of Palestine should directly participate in the discussion at the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly of the Palestine question, which has been included on its agenda on the initiative of the Arab countries, and with the support of many other countries, including the socialist States.

14. The Soviet Union was pleased to note and to accept the decisions taken at the Sixth Arab Summit Conference held at Algiers in November 1973, and at the Second Islamic Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government held at Lahore in February 1974, recognizing the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine.

15. At the present time, a majority of the States Members of the United Nations have already come out and acknowledged that organization as the representative of the Arab people of Palestine. We have only to recall that the draft resolution inviting the PLO to participate in the deliberations of the General Assembly on the question of Palestine [A/L.736 and Add.1 and 2] has been submitted by more than 70 States Members of the United Nations, which have, according to the dictates of their heart and in the name of historical justice, voluntarily declared that they wish to become sponsors of that draft resolution.

16. As a result of a visit by a delegation from the PLO and the talks that were held with it in Moscow during the summer of this year, the Soviet Union has agreed that a representation of that organization should be established in the USSR.

17. As was stated on 11 October of this year in Kishinev by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Leonid I. Brezhnev:

“Finally, it is necessary to implement the decisions of the United Nations to guarantee the liberation of the lands seized by Israel to satisfy the legitimate interests of the Arab people of Palestine and their right to their own national homeland. This should be done without any further delay, if we want durable peace in the Middle East. To defer a deci-

sion on these matters and to protract the present situation—which only plays into the hands of the Israeli occupiers—would mean to sit on a powder-keg which might explode at any time.

“That is why the Soviet Union is resolutely in favour of the immediate and effective renewal of the work of the Geneva Peace Conference with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestinians. A just and lasting peace should finally be established in the Middle East. That will benefit the security of all the States in the area, including Israel. And we are convinced that such a peace will be established, because that is the desire of peoples and is demanded in the interests of general security.”

18. Guided by these highly humanitarian and just principles and ideals, the Soviet Union has, as you know, actively supported the participation of the PLO in the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East, on an equal footing with all the other participants, so that the representatives of that organization, representing as they do the interests of the Palestinian people, could themselves put forward their own programme for settling the Palestine problem within the context of those international efforts aimed at solving the problem in the Middle East.

19. The Government and the people of the Soviet Union consider that the speedy normalization of the situation in the Middle East, the removal from that area of all vestiges of Israeli aggression, the withdrawal of all Israeli forces from all occupied Arab lands and the enjoyment by the Arab people of Palestine of their own legitimate national rights in accordance with the Charter and the decisions of the United Nations—all these are prerequisites for a just and lasting peace to be established in the Middle East. A sound peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved without the complete evacuation by Israel of all the occupied Arab territories and without ensuring at the same time the legitimate national rights of the Arab people of Palestine. No settlement of this matter without the participation of the Palestinian people or at the expense of its own vital interests can be either just or lasting.

20. The Soviet delegation is convinced that the participation of the representatives of the Palestinian people who have been recognized by the international community, namely, the delegation of the PLO, in the deliberations of the plenary Assembly on the question of Palestine is a necessary and useful action which will promote efforts to bring about a just and peaceful settlement of the Middle East problem.

21. Mr. KINENE (Uganda): The Uganda delegation, in deciding to make a statement from this rostrum, is motivated by the great importance and seriousness that we attach to the question of Palestine in its totality and, in particular, the value of that people's being represented while their fate is being discussed by this august body. The Palestine question is a very emotional subject for most of us, but to do it justice as it deserves calls for calm, rational and deep understanding.

22. The Organization has discussed the explosive situation in the Middle East many times, resolutions have been adopted and yet we have never achieved a real solution, that is, a just and lasting peace. My

delegation has always believed and still believes that there can never be and will never be a just and lasting peace in the entire Middle East region until serious and bold measures are taken to resolve the Palestinian problem. The basis for such measures for a meaningful solution of the Middle East crisis is the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, the refugees' right to return to their homes, their right to repatriation and compensation and, above all, their right to determine their destiny as free men. That is the basis and the price of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

23. However, it has remained a sad commentary on the usefulness of our deliberations and goodness of our intentions that all our efforts have been obstructed by Israel's determination to block any possible solution by its adamant commitment to its policy of expansionism and acquisition of territory by the use of force. This has happened with impunity. Thus, the Palestinians, disappointed and disillusioned by the absence of practical and effective action on the part of the international community, were left with no other recourse but to take responsibility for their own struggle and survival and to proclaim their determination and right to exist as a nation.

24. The records and history of decolonization, of which most of us stand as a testimony, have demonstrated that a people, aware of their identity and their rights and committed to the liberation of their motherland, always and inevitably realize their aspirations. The destiny of the people of Palestine cannot be an exception. It is therefore the considered opinion of the Ugandan Government that any solution of the entire Middle East problem adopted in disregard of this new awareness of the Palestinian people, this reality, would be illusory and doomed to failure.

25. The existence of the Palestinian nation cannot be denied. It is a fact of political life that a people that has struggled is a people that exists; and the Palestinian people exists. It continues to look to and count upon the whole-hearted understanding and moral and material aid of all nations represented here that love peace and freedom. We are thus called upon to invoke the very principles on which this Organization was founded. My delegation, as a sponsor of draft resolution A/L.736 and Add.1 and 2, appeals to all States here represented to support, as an act of good faith and an expression of serious concern over the need for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, that draft resolution, which calls for the participation of the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people, the PLO, in the deliberations of this august body. In the view of my delegation that would be a clear demonstration by this Assembly of our deep concern over the explosive situation in that region.

26. To us, the right of the PLO to address this body is a logical outcome of the legitimacy of its cause and of its existence. The PLO is the legitimate movement that represents the people of Palestine. It is recognized by many international organizations, including, I am proud to say, OAU. That liberation movement represents all the Palestinian people. It would be a worthy act and a great source of inspiration to the people of Palestine if their right to participate in our deliberations on their cause and their fate was recognized and their right to address this august body granted.

27. The Palestinians are not merely displaced persons: they are a nation struggling for independence. Nobody in this Organization has the right to be the chief spokesman for the Palestinian people. The right belongs to the people of Palestine to determine their destiny and run their affairs as they deem appropriate. That is why my delegation believes in the wisdom of the participation of the PLO in the deliberations on their fate, which are to take place under an item on our agenda.

28. Mr. KANTÉ (Mali) (*interpretation from French*): The General Assembly, by its wise decision to include the question of Palestine in the agenda of its twenty-ninth session, has corrected its past errors and broken with the compromises which had contributed to locking the Middle East in a dramatic crisis, and even to exacerbating that crisis. Indeed, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Samba Cissoko, said in his statement in the general debate on the 7th of this month:

“The Palestinian problem is not one which presents itself in humanitarian terms, which is how it has been represented for more than 30 years now, but rather in political terms, because it relates to the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination.

“... The Palestinian problem ... is at the very heart of the Middle East tragedy.” [2259th meeting, paras. 74 and 75.]

29. Thus by leaving the well-worn path of “interim agreements” and “balanced solutions” dear to one school of thought and by taking into consideration the real Palestinian situation, the Assembly has broken out of the straitjacket of ambiguity in which it had been bound by the requirements of a cause that had nothing in common with the noble objectives of the Charter.

30. Although this re-evaluation of the situation is being made after more than a quarter of a century of hesitations and manoeuvrings, still there can be no doubt that the new path chosen by the Assembly is the only one which can lead to a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East crisis. By taking that path, despite pressures, our Assembly has shown a realism and an objectivity which do it honour and we are convinced that it will discuss the question with the same determination and the same high sense of justice and of its international responsibilities. After it has taken its rightful part in settling the Middle East crisis, the Organization must be scrupulous in ensuring that procedure is correctly observed, and in that connexion the organization of our debates is a fundamental matter. All parties must be heard, particularly Israel and the Palestinian people, which that State confronts on the battlefield. Indeed, it would be impossible to reach an equitable and final settlement without hearing the principal parties to the conflict.

31. That is why my delegation, together with more than 70 other countries, has submitted to the General Assembly a draft resolution in accordance with which the Assembly would invite the PLO to participate in its deliberations on the question of Palestine. The proposal is in accordance not only with universal legal traditions but also with the well-known traditions of the Organization. It is a legal prerequisite to the debate on the item. At this point we are not dealing with

the substance of the matter. The proposal should not, in principle, meet with any opposition in the Assembly.

32. The representative status of the PLO is quite evident, because the PLO is, as has been said, a concerned party in the Middle East conflict. It has, since 1964, encompassed all the militant branches of the Palestine liberation movement. At the international level it can speak for the people of Palestine and act on its behalf. In that connexion, it must be recalled that it participated in the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, the General Conference of UNESCO, the World Population Conference and so on. It has an executive council, a central council and a deliberative national council. As an outgrowth of the Palestinian people, the PLO is today recognized by more than 90 Member States.

33. My delegation has no doubt that the Assembly, which is now resolved fully to assume its responsibilities in equity and justice and in the interests of international peace and security, will reject the legal quibbles that will certainly be made and accept this request for a procedure that is acceptable in both its substance and its method. We therefore appeal to the wisdom of the members of the Assembly.

34. Mr. NAÇO (Albania) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of the People's Republic of Albania wishes to explain its position on draft resolution A/L.736 and Add.1 and 2, in which the General Assembly would invite the PLO, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate in the deliberations of the General Assembly on the question of Palestine in plenary meetings.

35. Since it was admitted as a Member of the United Nations, my country has been an active participant in all the discussions that have taken place here in connexion with the Palestine question. We have always emphasized that that problem is above all a political question of great importance, one very closely linked with defence of and rigorous respect for the sovereign right of peoples to liberation from the imperialist foreign colonial yoke, with the right to existence of the sorely tried and heroic Palestinian people and with peace and security in the Middle East.

36. At the same time we have criticized the way in which this question has been dealt with by the Organization, which has taken the wrong approach to the matter and, instead of dealing with the real problem, that is, the restoration to the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, has confined itself entirely to discussing the humanitarian aspects, dealing with the matter as essentially a question of refugees.

37. Everyone knows that for more than two decades now an entire people, the Arab people of Palestine, has been expelled from its sacred homeland by force of arms as a result of the open aggression of Israel, incited and powerfully supported by international Zionism and the imperialist Powers, primarily the United States of America. Throughout that period the most monstrous crimes, and every form of persecution and torture, have been inflicted by the Israeli invaders on the martyred Palestinian people in order simply to wipe them off the face of the earth, and to carry out aggressive Israeli designs not only against Palestine and its people but also against other Arab peoples in the area.

38. A multitude of incontrovertible facts have shown that the tragedy of Palestine is inseparable from the whole aggressive policy of the two super-Powers and their plans for pillage, from their rivalries and their bargaining with a view to seizing strategic positions in that area so that they can realize their imperialist designs and rob the Arab peoples of their great petroleum resources, estimated as representing two thirds of the total world petroleum resources.

39. The heroic people of Palestine, thus martyred, has never bowed its head before the barbarism and crimes of Israel, or the pressures, blackmail and endless plots hatched by the super-Powers in order to bring about a so-called political settlement of the problem. The Palestinians remained firm, and courageously continued their armed struggle against the Israeli aggressors, in full and close solidarity with the other Arab peoples.

40. During the war of October 1973 the Palestinian people showed the strength of its courage, its noble spirit of sacrifice and its ineluctable desire to reconquer the rights of which it had been deprived. It is resolved to fight for its liberation to the very end, until all its lofty national aspirations have been achieved.

41. By its heroic struggle the people of Palestine has won the admiration and support of all freedom-loving peoples and countries throughout the world, because its just liberation struggle is the struggle of a people that has been denied its legitimate national right to live freely and independently in its own homeland.

42. The Albanian delegation, thus expressing the feelings of the Albanian people, a faithful friend of the Palestinian people which has always sincerely and unreservedly supported its just struggle, is convinced that the freedom-loving Member States of the United Nations, which defend justice and sincerely desire the establishment of real peace and stability in the Middle East, will give all necessary help and support to the heroic Palestinian people, and invite its representatives to participate in the General Assembly's consideration of the question of Palestine. Its participation is essential if we are to consider this important problem objectively.

43. Our delegation supports draft resolution A/L.736 and Add.1 and 2, and will vote in favour of it.

44. Mr. KAMIL (Indonesia): My delegation was one of those requesting the inscription of the question of Palestine on the agenda of this session of the General Assembly [A/L.9742 and Add.1-4]. We also joined the other sponsors of draft resolution A/L.736 and Add.1 and 2, which has the aim of inviting the representatives of the PLO to participate in the debate on the question of Palestine in plenary meetings of the Assembly.

45. I am sure it is nothing new to this Assembly for me to state that Indonesia has always been of the view that the Middle East problem cannot be solved unless an equitable and acceptable solution can be found for the question of Palestine and the Palestinian people. On various occasions we have expressed our view that representatives of the Palestinians should be allowed to participate in discussions which directly concern them and which will decide their fate as a people, a people not born in any other country, a people which knows no other homeland.

46. We have said that at this session of the Assembly and at previous sessions, and we have said it in the Security Council. Speaking from this very rostrum on 24 September last, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Mr. Adam Malik, declared:

“... a satisfactory solution of the Palestinian aspect of the problem will remain a *conditio sine qua non* for the return of a stable peace in the Middle East. The participation of Palestinian representatives in all talks affecting their future is, therefore, a matter of great importance.” [2241st meeting, para. 17.]

47. As sons of the soil, as those who were driven away from their homes, their villages, their orchards and their lands, it is only natural that they should be included and actively participate in any meeting or conference or negotiations affecting their land and themselves. That principle has been enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in hundreds of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly throughout these years. From the resolutions of 1947 all the way through to the recent decisions of the United Nations, the vital involvement of the Palestinian people in the eventual establishment of peace in the Middle East has been much underscored.

48. The non-participation of the Palestinians in any international effort to put an end to the Middle East conflict will make impossible the implementation of resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council and will make our common effort in the search for peace and stability in the Middle East fruitless and futile. Furthermore, whatever excuses could and would be devised to negate this inevitable truth, and whatever accusations one would throw toward the Palestinians and the PLO, the plain fact cannot be denied that the Palestinians are the true and real inhabitants of Palestine and therefore the principal party to the question of Palestine.

49. The PLO is officially recognized and endorsed as the representative of the Palestinian people by the League of Arab States. My delegation considers it only proper, therefore, that in the debates in the plenary Assembly the PLO should be allowed to participate as representatives of the Palestinian people, and my delegation is convinced that the presence of the representatives of the PLO in this Hall in the very near future, in the debates on the question of Palestine, will be warmly welcomed by the great majority of members of the Assembly.

50. Mr. JAIPAL (India): The General Assembly at this session has placed on its agenda the item entitled “Question of Palestine” and has allocated that item to the plenary Assembly for its consideration. When this question comes eventually to be discussed in the plenary Assembly in its substance, it is only natural, and indeed we think it is necessary, that the views of the Palestinian people should be available to the plenary Assembly.

51. The draft resolution before us [A/L.736 and Add.1 and 2] seeks to invite the PLO to participate in our deliberations because that organization represents the people of Palestine. Whether or not the PLO has been elected by the Palestinian people is neither material nor relevant at this stage. The fact is that the PLO is recognized by all the Arab States, and many

others too, as the political organization representing the Palestinian people.

52. In our opinion, it would be entirely unrealistic to ignore that aspect of the matter in considering the Palestine question. We cannot simply imagine a situation in which the PLO has been denied a hearing by us. We are dealing with the future of some 3 million people of Palestine. They can no longer be treated simply as refugees to be maintained indefinitely on international charity, nor can they be dismissed as terrorists. Their future is a matter of sacred trust that reposed once in the League of Nations. Now we, as the successor to the League of Nations, are required to discharge that sacred trust.

53. In our opinion, we cannot do so without hearing the representatives of the Palestinian people. It is in that sense that we have co-sponsored the draft resolution before us. We commend its adoption and we say that in adopting it we are not in any sense threatening the security or the existence of the State of Israel. We shall in fact only be granting the Palestinian people the right to be heard by us before their future is decided.

54. Mr. HOLLAI (Hungary): At this stage, our debate on the question of Palestine is aimed at inviting the representative of the PLO to take part in the discussion of one of the most pressing issues of present international political life. My country and my delegation, from the very outset, has supported the just struggle of the Palestinian people. Hungary is among the sponsors of draft resolution A/L.736 and Add.1 and 2.

55. As I stated in my letter addressed to the Secretary-General on 16 September 1974 [A/9753], the Hungarian delegation fully supports the inclusion of the item entitled “Question of Palestine” in the agenda of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly. That support of the Hungarian delegation is based upon the firm principles held by the Hungarian Government concerning the Middle East and the question of Palestine.

56. From the number of sponsors and their wide representative character, one can see clearly that we wish to have a substantial political discussion on this subject with the competent representative of the PLO, and not to permit mistakes, which often happened in the past when important issues and matters were dealt with without the presence of the competent representatives of the questions concerned.

57. This year's general debate in the General Assembly, recently concluded, has clearly shown the almost unanimous opinion of the Member States that it is essential to use the given momentum of political *détente* in order to find political solutions to still unsolved questions.

58. I think that no one here would deny the fact that the question of Palestine is one of those issues which has long awaited its right solution. Therefore, those who supported and support the invitation to the PLO are led by the sincere desire to contribute to the solution of this pending issue.

59. May I say, finally, that while speaking here at this rostrum, and while I have the pleasure to declare my support and that of my delegation for the invitation

to the PLO, the PLO delegation, headed by its recognized leader, Yassir Arafat, is conducting talks in Hungary with the competent leaders of my country.

60. Mr. HUSSEIN (Somalia): My delegation believes that draft resolution A/L.736 and Add.1 and 2, now before the General Assembly, proposes a most realistic and constructive step towards the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. For 27 years the Palestinian people have struggled against Israel's denial of their legitimate rights and even of their existence as a people with legitimate national aspirations. Their struggle has been at the heart of the conflict that has caused four wars and chronic tension in the Middle East since 1947, and yet the United Nations has failed time and again to deal directly with this issue.

61. In the Middle East question, as in many others, a powerful minority often acts to prevent a majority of Member States from redressing long-standing injustices, until the United Nations is faced with violent conflict and bloodshed, which are the inevitable results of bitterness, frustration and despair. The United Nations must not continue its spasmodic and ineffectual action on the periphery of the Middle East question. The proposal before us is a welcome sign that the Organization has begun to move towards the centre of this issue. The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, have long been recognized by the General Assembly. The draft resolution is, therefore, in keeping with other United Nations initiatives which have recognized the liberation struggle of peoples that have been the victims of injustices of historic proportions. The alternatives confronting the Palestinians are armed struggle or obliteration and oblivion. Faced with these alternatives, they have steadfastly refused to be swept under the rug of history. They have insisted that the world hear their voices and respond to their plight. There is no more suitable forum in which they can state their cause than the General Assembly. It was here, 27 years ago, that this body, acting under imperialist pressures, committed the grave injustice of agreeing to the partitioning of Palestine. It was here too, 26 years ago, that the injustice of partition was compounded by recognition of the State of Israel.

62. Formal recognition by the General Assembly that the Palestinian people is the principal party to the question of Palestine is long overdue. Over the years the Arab countries and many other Member States with an objective concern for justice have been conscious of the wrong done to the Palestinian people, have supported their cause and have helped to keep their plight before the conscience of the world. Over the years it has been reiterated in all organs and committees of the United Nations and by Member States of every group, including Israel's most determined supporters, that the resolution of the Middle East conflict depends essentially on a just solution of the problem of the dispersed Arab people of Palestine. If we are to act logically and reasonably about this generally accepted premise, we must listen to the voices of the Palestinians themselves. For too long they have had to speak through others. They alone can speak authoritatively about their aspirations. The most practical way in which they can be heard is

through an invitation to their representatives, the PLO, to participate in the deliberations of the General Assembly on the question of Palestine. However, it is not only in the General Assembly that they must be heard. The whole Middle East question has reached the crucial stage, and the action of the General Assembly now can help to provide a much-needed momentum towards the definitive arrangements which alone can secure peace in that area. It is the view of my delegation that the PLO must not only be allowed to participate in the debate on Palestine but also be present at any international conference and any negotiations where decisions relating to the future of the Palestinian people are discussed. Its presence at the forthcoming session of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East is particularly necessary if the failures of the past two decades are not to be repeated and if tensions and violence are not to remain endemic in the Middle East.

63. The PLO has long represented and led the exiled Palestinian people in their bitter struggle for national survival and has been the symbol of their indomitable spirit. The support that the organization has gained from the Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, from the Islamic Conference, from OAU and from the socialist countries is evidence of its world-wide recognition as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

64. My delegation hopes that the draft resolution will be passed by a clear majority, so that the General Assembly can at last come to grips with the essential problems of the Middle East conflict.

65. Mr. RAMPHUL (Mauritius): What I have to say regarding the 72-Power draft resolution contained in document A/L.736 and Add.1 and 2 on the invitation to the PLO to participate in the deliberations of the General Assembly on the question of Palestine in plenary meetings would take no less than 45 minutes; but my colleagues need not be unduly alarmed. For the sake of brevity, I shall speak for less than one minute.

66. All the arguments in favour of the draft resolution have already been amply advanced. There is nothing more for me to add except to state that the very fact that Mauritius has sponsored the draft resolution is eloquent enough. This action is even more significant in that Mauritius is one of a very small handful of African States still maintaining diplomatic relations with Israel.

67. Mr. AL-SAYEGH (Kuwait): The draft resolution before the Assembly is predicated on a very simple proposition, namely, that if an organization like the United Nations, whose Charter is founded on the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, decides to consider the question of the fate and future of a people, it would be acting inconsistently with its own principles if it proceeded so to do without the participation of the people in question in its deliberations. The General Assembly, by adopting this draft resolution, would be redeeming itself from the charge of inconsistency.

68. If this proposition applies in general to all peoples, it applies with greater relevance to the particular case of the people of Palestine, for, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country said during the

general debate [2249th meeting, para. 306], the people of Palestine was compelled to be absent for the 57 years during which decisions and agreements were adopted which affected its future; and that was both a symptom and a cause of the tragedy of the people of Palestine. In order to adopt a corrective approach to the tragedy of the people of Palestine, the United Nations has to adopt as its point of departure the recognition that the participation of the legitimate representative of the people of Palestine in its deliberations is a necessity; otherwise it would be acting in contradiction with its own principles and in continuation of the practices that led in the past to the tragedy of Palestine.

69. The legitimate representative of the people of Palestine—the PLO—is an organization that has been recognized not only by all the States mentioned in the many statements made this morning and this afternoon, but it has been recognized—and this is even more important—by every popular organization of Palestinians in existence. It has been recognized by the Union of Palestinian Women, the General Union of Palestinian Students, the Union of Palestinian Teachers, the Union of Palestinian Jurists, the Union of Palestinian Engineers and every other union of Palestinians that exists. It is the Palestinian people that has acknowledged and recognized the PLO as its legitimate representative. For anybody to state from this platform that the PLO does not represent the Palestinians is an arrogant act that is possible only to those who can say they know the minds of the Palestinians better than the Palestinians themselves. It is possible only for those who, having subjected the people of Palestine and occupied its land, seek now also to preempt its will and to claim that they, rather than the people of Palestine, can decide who may or may not represent the people of Palestine.

70. By the same token, just as the legitimacy of the representation by the PLO of the people of Palestine cannot be questioned, so too its status as a liberation movement cannot be questioned. Every liberation movement in the world today recognizes the PLO as a liberation movement. Every country that has recently acquired its independence through a liberation movement has recognized the PLO as a liberation movement. It would take the arrogance of claiming to know more about liberation than liberation movements and liberated countries—it would take that—to embolden one to say that the PLO is not a liberation movement.

71. It has been said that article 9 of the Covenant of the PLO deprives it of the qualifications for speaking to this Assembly, because it states that armed struggle is the path to the liberation of Palestine. Need I remind this Assembly that paragraph 2 of resolution 3070 (XXVIII), adopted by this same Assembly, reads:

*“Also reaffirms the legitimacy of the peoples' struggle for liberation from colonial and foreign domination and alien subjugation by all available means, including armed struggle.”*

72. Ninety-seven Members of this Assembly voted for this paragraph which followed a paragraph that reaffirmed past resolutions, naming the people of Palestine among those peoples whose liberation struggle is recognized.

73. It has also been said that the PLO is disqualified by article 19 of its Covenant in which the Plan of Partition is declared null and void. May I remind the Assembly that 11 days ago the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel stated from this very rostrum:

*“Every representative here would reject a resolution which strikes at the foundation of his country's being. One cannot ask of any nation to agree to its own elimination or to commit suicide.” [2255th meeting, para. 251.]*

The people of Palestine agree. The people of Palestine say, “We cannot be asked to agree to our own elimination. We reject the partition resolution and consider it null and void for the very same reason for which the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, only 11 days ago, said that every nation and every people have that similar right, unless we are to say that peoples are not equal and that what applies to Israel and to the Israeli people does not apply to the people of Palestine and thereby contradict the very Charter of the United Nations”.

74. Finally, and with this I shall conclude, we have been told that the alleged terrorism of the PLO disqualifies it from the right to appear before this Assembly. I thoroughly concur with this criterion. Terrorism disqualifies any party from appearing before this Assembly and, correctly applied, this would disqualify no other than Israel from being eligible to appear before this Assembly and to speak to it. My delegation firmly hopes that this Assembly will overwhelmingly support the proposition at the root of the draft resolution before us today and augment the prospects of peace in our area by adding justice to its methodology and by inviting the PLO to participate in the Assembly's deliberations on the question of Palestine.

75. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): We shall now take a decision on draft resolution A/L.736 and Add.1 and 2. A roll-call vote has been requested.

*A vote was taken by roll-call.*

*Sudan, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.*

*In favour: Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Congo, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Dahomey, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Khmer Republic, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama,*

Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka.

*Against:* United States of America, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Israel.

*Abstaining:* United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Australia, Barbados, Belgium, Burma, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Germany (Federal Republic of), Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Laos, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Paraguay.

The draft resolution was adopted by 105 votes to 4, with 20 abstentions (resolution 3210 (XXIX)).

76. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I have on my list a number of speakers who have asked to speak in explanation of vote, either before or after the vote, in accordance with rule 88 of the rules of procedure. It was decided that all explanations of vote would be given after the vote and in this connexion I should like to thank particularly the delegation of Colombia for its very friendly co-operation.

77. Mr. CAICEDO (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Colombia has as cardinal points of its international policy the defence of the principle of self-determination of peoples and a rejection of any form of territorial conquest by force. It also rejects any violation of human rights and any abuse made of the manpower or of the natural resources of other peoples.

78. In the complex case of the Middle East, Colombia has been a pioneer in support of the integration of this region by agreements of the parties involved which would safeguard the ethnic, religious, cultural and economic interests so closely intertwined there. We have always displayed a concern for the fate of Palestine, which is not an abolished historical name nor a geographical concept but rather represents a nation with long-standing roots in the area and one that has a clear right to seek its recognition and organization as a State, to enjoy a full juridical international personality and to gather together its people in a territory of its own, free and independent.

79. Colombia has always regretted that the Middle East has not been able to find an integral solution and that the birth of Israel and its existence, which flows from the same order of rights and international principles, has been clouded and its future threatened by the absence of a Palestine which would be on an equal footing. Thus it was that, on 28 November 1947, in the plenary meeting of the Assembly, which was then being held in Flushing Meadow, the representative of Colombia, Mr. Alfonso Lopez Pumarejo, commenting on the report of the Special Committee on Palestine, stated:

“... we cannot overlook or underestimate the fact that among the thirteen votes counted against the partition of Palestine, every one of the Moslem countries is included. If the Jewish problem is both religious and racial, we find that it does not forebode well for the execution of the plan that it should have been unanimously rejected by the whole Moslem world; not quietly rejected, but under strong protests; not by a small portion of mankind, but by the representatives of four hundred million people of one religious creed. No wonder that the plan has

had to come across the Atlantic in search of the supporters that it has failed to find in the countries adjoining Palestine, in the eastern Mediterranean, in western Europe, or in the distant Asiatic mainland.”<sup>1</sup>

80. We have been and we continue to be aware of Palestinian rights and Arab feelings in this connexion, feelings which are fully justifiable and have been ignored for so many years. It might seem that in today's discussion we are apparently deciding whether or not to give the Arab world in general and Palestine in particular the right to be heard for the first time in the plenary Assembly on the constitution of its national being. If this were so, our vote would certainly have been affirmative. Unfortunately, the reality of the Palestinian case here is unfolding in an illusory forum because the fate of that nation and of the Middle East will not be decided now, by our vote, but, rather, far from this Hall, and frankly, outside the United Nations. Colombia does not wish to take the position of a country which has deliberately cast a wrong vote, in one way or another, in the belief that it is contributing to the solution of a problem that has become an object of simultaneous rivalry and negotiation between the great Powers outside the Organization.

81. If the obvious reality of world policy is the fact that today the power of the great constitutes the decisive factor in solving international problems, it is preferable that this reality should be established and formalized clearly and that the Member States of the United Nations should not contribute to maintaining the pretence that its decisions are resolving conflicts such as that in the Middle East, when the discussions and the decisions in this connexion take place exclusively in two or three forums of power, outside the deliberations and the vote of international bodies.

82. The most recent illustration is the case of Viet Nam and a constant reminder of the situation is the case of world disarmament: these matters have been taken out of our hands.

83. We are faced with the paradox that, while the United Nations has become more universal with the entry of China and the presence of nations that have gained their independence, decisive power on burning issues does not appear to come closer but rather retreats further from us.

84. In April and May of this year, the sixth special session of the General Assembly supplied the promising sight of a third world aware of the need to establish a new economic order and agreed on a plan of action that should lead us to that indispensable state of justice. We felt we were making history and giving the United Nations a new impetus and direction in the economic field and in that of justice among peoples. However, those goals, which we achieved by consensus, were diminished by the reservations and the timidity of the great economic Powers that persisted in maintaining an outdated system, which originated in the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century and which is the image of neo-colonialism.

85. If it is true, as the spokesmen of the great Powers declare, that we are living in the era of interdependence, it is high time this Organization had real power in political decisions, because there exists no

area in the world that can be indifferent, and no region should be left outside joint action by the international community organized on the moral and the legal level as the United Nations.

86. For all these reasons our abstention represents neither indifference nor neutrality in the face of the problem but rather a strong protest at the denial and disregard of its decisive power suffered by this Organization through the policies of the super-Powers, which remind us of the procedures of the Holy Alliance.

87. Mr. DE GUIRINGAUD (France) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to explain briefly the significance of the positive vote which my delegation has just cast on the draft resolution the General Assembly has been considering. In recent years, both in the General Assembly and in the Security Council, France has always come out in favour of the true state of affairs regarding the Palestine question being taken into account. On 23 September last, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs reaffirmed this attitude before the Assembly [2238th meeting, paras. 128-130]. My Government considers that any peace settlement which does not take account of this essential factor will run a strong risk of coming up against insuperable difficulties in its implementation.

88. It was because it was aware of the true situation with regard to Palestine that in 1970 and 1972 the Assembly adopted resolutions 2628 (XXV) and 2949 (XXVII), which recognized that respect for the rights of the Palestinians is an indispensable element in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In the same spirit, the Special Political Committee in recent years, when discussing the question of UNRWA, has agreed to hear a delegation from the PLO. It was logical, therefore, that our Assembly should include the Palestinian question on its agenda and give the representatives of the Palestinians a chance to express themselves. We hope that this hearing will make a useful and constructive contribution to the debate, by assisting the search on the part of the parties concerned for a peaceful settlement. Although the problems involved in the wording of the text we had before us did not seem to us to be entirely cleared up, France decided to vote in favour. It was our feeling, in effect, that, as regards the representative status of the PLO, account should be taken of the opinion of the members of the League of Arab States, all of which spoke in favour of hearing the representatives of the PLO. However, we appreciate that the position of some delegations that agreed to the question of Palestine being included in the agenda for the present session might have been affected by uncertainties that the draft resolution we had before us failed to dispel.

89. With regard to the thorough discussion that our Assembly intends to hold on the Palestinian question, I should like to make it clear that the vote my delegation cast today in no way prejudices the position it may adopt at that time and that it goes without saying that this position will depend essentially on the proposals submitted to us. Our position will not fail to take account of all the elements involved and, in particular, all the decisions and resolutions adopted by the United Nations in connexion with Palestine since 1947, notably Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

90. My Government continues to believe that any peace settlement must be negotiated and accepted by all the parties involved in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations, whose responsibility has been properly emphasized by a number of speakers and whose guarantee, for that very reason, remains indispensable.

91. My Government feels, in particular, that if the forthcoming debate is to be constructive it must not in any way jeopardize the two principles that have been so frequently reaffirmed: namely, that the settlement must stipulate at one and the same time withdrawal from occupied territories and peace commitments involving both for Israel and for its neighbours, as France has always maintained, the right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries. It is only on this condition that a just and lasting peace can finally be established in the Middle East.

92. Mr. TEMPLETON (New Zealand): New Zealand's vote on the resolution we have just adopted related strictly to the question of whether the PLO should be heard on the Palestine item in this Assembly.

93. New Zealand has in the past agreed to the attendance at certain international conferences of representatives of liberation movements recognized by the appropriate regional organization. This does not mean that we necessarily approve of all the methods employed by such movements. New Zealand's opposition to armed violence and terrorism is well known.

94. In our view, there is an overriding reason why the PLO should be allowed to attend, observe and speak in the forthcoming debate on the Palestine question in this Assembly. There is no doubt of the Organization's direct concern with and involvement in the issues to be considered under item 108. We consider it essential that all points of view be heard, and it seems to us that the PLO is best able to put forward the views of the Arab people of Palestine as such.

95. In casting a positive vote, my delegation did not consider it necessary to determine whether the PLO is the sole representative of the Palestine people. Its vote is, moreover, without prejudice to New Zealand's attitude to the substance of the item, or to other aspects of the Middle East question, or to the attendance of the PLO at other meetings on other occasions.

96. Mr. RICHARD (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom did not feel able this afternoon to support the draft resolution which the Assembly has just adopted. With your permission, I should like to explain why.

97. The British Government has made plain many times its belief that no peace settlement in the Middle East is possible that does not take account of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. The British Foreign Secretary has several times spoken of the need for any settlement to provide for a personality for the Palestinian people. It follows, therefore, that we consider it right that the views of Palestinians should be heard.

98. The normal practice has been for non-governmental representatives to be heard in committees of the Assembly. But the draft resolution proposed a departure from a practice to which the British Government attaches great importance—the practice that only the

representatives of States should participate in the debates of the plenary Assembly.

99. Today we are dealing with what is essentially a matter of procedure. Our vote is not therefore to be taken as indicating an attitude on any substantive implications in the resolution, for example, the question of the representation of the Palestinians. Above all, our view remains that it must be the overriding aim of this General Assembly, whether it is dealing with questions of procedure or with issues of substance, to do nothing through its deliberations and its resolutions which might jeopardize efforts to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East.

100. Mr. RAE (Canada): The Canadian delegation did not support draft resolution A/L.736 and Add.1 and 2. One difficulty concerns the envisaged procedure for participation in plenary meetings of the General Assembly. In our view, there is sound justification for the existing well-established practice whereby participation in the deliberations of this Assembly, as distinct from the opportunity to address committees, has been reserved to delegations representing the Governments of States Members of the United Nations.

101. This seems to us an important condition for the efficient pursuit of the Assembly's work, and an acknowledgement of the fact that the United Nations is, essentially, an organization of sovereign States.

102. We believe that the views of the Palestinians, which we agree should be presented in an appropriate fashion during any discussions affecting their interests, could be fully taken into account without departing from established procedures.

103. Canada today has serious reservations about the possible impact of this draft resolution on the progress which has already been made and on the delicate contacts which are now under way in efforts to move towards a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement. Obviously, the question of the future status of the Palestinians must be a major element in any such settlement. We would not wish at this stage to prejudge the question of whether the PLO is the only legitimate representative of the Palestinians. This is a question to be resolved by the parties concerned.

104. In our view, it is preferable not to pronounce here upon a resolution which might in any way either prejudice early movement towards negotiations or impinge upon possible solutions to the Middle East conflict based on Security Council resolution 242 (1967).

105. For these reasons, and out of respect for sound General Assembly practice, Canada abstained on this draft resolution.

106. Mr. TABOR (Denmark): In taking an active part in the declaration adopted by the nine members of the European Economic Community [EEC] on 6 November 1973 during Denmark's presidency of EEC,<sup>2</sup> the Danish Government stressed, as its view, that, in the efforts to bring about just and lasting peace in the Middle East, account must be taken of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

107. Denmark recognizes that the Palestinian question is of paramount importance for the attainment of an over-all solution to the Middle East conflict and,

under these circumstances, we consider it both useful and significant to hear the views of the PLO on this subject.

108. Notwithstanding this attitude, Denmark—like several other countries with which we are closely aligned, among them most of our Common Market partners—abstained in the vote on the resolution which was just adopted. Denmark did so out of consideration for a long-established principle in United Nations practice regarding the participation of non-governmental organizations in plenary meetings of the General Assembly.

109. Mr. JANKOWITSCH (Austria) (*interpretation from French*): In addressing the Assembly on 26 September last, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, Mr. Erich Bielka, stated:

“In the spirit of friendship that links us here with all the peoples and States in that region, my country profoundly hopes that this struggle for peace in the Middle East will no longer be hampered, in the future, by insurmountable obstacles. However, no satisfactory solution to this difficult problem can be found without taking into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, and without the existence of all States in the region receiving a firm guarantee.” [2244th meeting, para. 80.]

110. On this basis Austria, as a member of the General Committee of this Assembly, voted for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda, entitled the “Question of Palestine”. Aware of the paramount importance of this aspect of the problem of the Middle East to any solution of the crisis, the Austrian Government recognizes the usefulness of a discussion of the question of Palestine. As do all other Members of this Assembly, we hope that this debate will make a constructive contribution to the joint efforts to find peace, security and peaceful coexistence for all peoples and nations of the region, whether they be the Arab peoples or the Israeli people.

111. There can be no doubt that in any debate on the Palestinian reality the Palestinian people and its future must take an important place. As the general debate at this session of the General Assembly clearly demonstrated, the international community continues to be aware of the sufferings of the Palestinian people, and of all peoples in the region, as a consequence of a long and distressing crisis. The international community likewise seems to be united in its belief that the recognition of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, in the context of the secure existence of all States of the region, should not be delayed. It is quite clear that, in a discussion of this type, all parties directly involved should be heard and that all parties—I repeat, all parties—have the right to the greatest respect and understanding from us.

112. On the basis of those considerations, Austria voted for the draft resolution submitted by more than 70 sponsors. It did so in spite of hesitations based on legal and procedural considerations. Some speakers who preceded me set forth the nature of these considerations.

113. In its vote today, the Assembly has been motivated by a desire to hear in this Hall a representative voice of the Palestinian people. Other equally representative voices must be added to this debate to

enable us to find solutions corresponding to the desires of all peoples of the region—the Arab peoples and the people of Israel.

114. The basis on which this debate should take place must be peaceful and humane coexistence of the peoples of the region and a recognition of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all States whose need and desire to live within recognized and secure frontiers should be respected. Our future debate should also attempt to give solid support to all efforts by the United Nations to ease the problem and to take new steps, so as to achieve a new order of peace in the Middle East.

115. Our position on the substance of the matter will be based upon adherence to these principles and respect for earlier United Nations resolutions, in particular those which have been accepted by all parties.

116. Frequently in the past, as other speakers have said, violence, the shedding of innocent blood and terror have been means by which political objectives, legitimate though they might have been, were tragically expressed. May this first debate, open to all, on one of the most emotionally charged questions of the Middle East mark a decisive change towards a universal and final adoption of peaceful means to solve the grave problems that remain before us.

117. Mr. PLAJA (Italy) (*interpretation from French*): In casting a vote in favour of the draft resolution which has just been adopted, the Italian delegation wished to take into account all the aspects of the question on which the General Assembly is taking a decision today. May I, in this connexion, recall that from this same rostrum on 30 September [2249th meeting, para. 250] I confirmed that Italy has, for some time, considered—and affirmed this fact since 1970—that the problem of the Palestinian people is essentially a political one, because it is no longer possible to deny that people their right to have a country. At that time I also pointed out that the Italian Government has always laboured to achieve common political positions within the European Community. Even on the occasion of today's vote, my Government would like to reaffirm this constant aim of its line of conduct in the conviction that such an aim may be reached during the discussion of the problem that is to take place later on.

118. The support given by my delegation to draft resolution A/L.736 and Add.1 and 2 should therefore be interpreted in the spirit of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), whose implementation in its entirety still represents, so far as we in Italy see it, the essential basis for any political settlement of the Middle East crisis.

119. It would appear essential that all the main parties concerned endeavour to find such a settlement. Furthermore, Italy believes, without wishing in any way to raise the question of the Palestinian people's representation, that the PLO may be encouraged, by the draft resolution we have just adopted, to take a position in all fields which is likely to help to stimulate in a responsible way a realistic, equitable and lasting solution to the problem.

120. I should like to add that the vote of the Italian delegation must not be interpreted as prejudging in any way the position it will take on the substance of

the Palestinian problem which, it should not be forgotten, should be situated within the context of the Middle East problem as a whole. Italy's point of view in that connexion has frequently been expressed and I shall confine myself today to recalling that Security Council resolution 242 (1967) emphasized, *inter alia*, the need to ensure respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of all States in the region, including Israel, of course, and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

121. Finally, I should like to make it clear that, in the opinion of the Italian delegation, the decision we have taken today cannot be regarded as a precedent affecting the principle that only representatives of Member States are entitled to speak in the General Assembly. My delegation has maintained that point of view and expressed it only last week when the General Assembly, in granting observer status to EEC, took a decision to which my Government attaches particular importance.

122. Sir Laurence McINTYRE (Australia): I do not intend here to enter into the substance of this matter but simply to mention certain questionable considerations which, in the view of my delegation, the draft resolution just adopted raises in principle and in practice.

123. The fact that some 70 Member States have asked the General Assembly to invite a representative of the PLO to appear here and address the Assembly in a plenary meeting must be a clear indication of the prestige attached to this rostrum by our membership and of the cachet that it bestows in terms of full or even partial recognition. It is surely right that this plenary Assembly should have that distinctive prestige, as my delegation believes it always has had and for which we have accordingly respected it. We also believe that it should remain, as it has been in the past, a privilege reserved to Member States, through their accredited representatives, to address the Assembly from this rostrum. That does not mean, of course, that organizations and individuals having legitimate reasons for doing so should be denied the opportunity of addressing the United Nations by invitation. The committees of the General Assembly have traditionally provided just such opportunities and occasions. I have no doubt that if a representative of the PLO had been invited to address any of the committees of the Assembly on the question of Palestine he would have been listened to just as attentively as if he were addressing the plenary Assembly, by a large audience, including of course my own delegation, whether or not he was speaking for the whole Palestinian Arab liberation movement and whatever views we might have about some of the methods adopted by that movement. There would have been no question about his receiving a full and most attentive hearing on a matter that is obviously of acute and long-standing concern to all of us.

124. We all recognize that there can be no permanent and just settlement in the Middle East, taking account of all the provisions of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), until the Palestinian Arabs are assured, in the words of my Minister for Foreign Affairs in this chamber last week, "proper treatment, permanent homes and secure hopes for the future". [2259th meeting, para. 123.] But the General Assembly has

preserved, most recently some two weeks ago when we were considering the Cyprus situation, the well-established practice of keeping its debates in the plenary Assembly to its own membership and reaching its decisions in the light of those debates. My delegation doubts whether all Member States, including some that have supported the resolution adopted this afternoon, are really sure that a departure from that practice is in the best future interests of the General Assembly, or of the United Nations as a whole or of its individual Members.

125. Moreover, and most importantly, my delegation is not convinced that in this instance it will assist the delicate process of negotiation among the parties concerned, whether at Geneva or through bilateral discussions outside Geneva, towards that just, lasting and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East which all of us have longed for and sought after, in our different ways, for so many years and which must remain our imperative over-all objective.

126. In the light of those reservations, my delegation has been unable to give its support to the draft resolution.

127. Mr. RYDBECK (Sweden): The Swedish delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution inviting the PLO to participate in the debate on the question of Palestine. We believe it to be important that representatives of the Palestinian people are given the opportunity to express their views on this matter before the General Assembly. The solution of this immensely difficult problem requires the active co-operation of all interested parties. Our vote does not indicate any position on the substantive questions involved, such as whether the PLO has an exclusive right to represent the Palestinian people or not. Today we are concerned only with the question of granting that organization the right to be heard by us. As this item is being dealt with directly in the plenary Assembly, we have found it to be reasonable in this case that the representatives of the PLO be afforded the opportunity to speak in this forum.

128. Baron VON WECHMAR (Federal Republic of Germany): The delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany recognizes that the Palestinian question is of crucial importance to an over-all solution of the Middle East problem. In that connexion I should like to recall that, in their declaration of 6 November 1973,<sup>2</sup> the nine member Governments of EEC stressed the necessity of respecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in the interests of the establishment of a just and durable peace. We therefore consider it useful and important to hear the points of view of the PLO regarding this matter.

129. However, we abstained from voting in favour of draft resolution A/L.736 and Add.1 and 2 for two principal reasons: first, because that draft resolution did not conform to a long-established United Nations practice concerning the participation of non-governmental delegations in the debates of the General Assembly; and, secondly, because we did not consider ourselves competent to judge to what degree the PLO represents the people of Palestine.

130. I should like to add that under no circumstances will our vote prejudice our position concerning the

debate on the questions of substance, which will open in a few weeks.

131. Mr. KENNEDY (Ireland): In explanation of Ireland's positive vote on the draft resolution just adopted, we feel that, without prejudice to the substance of the issue, there is a certain equity in hearing those whose status as spokesmen of the Palestinians is accepted by virtually all Arab States.

132. We would have been ready to hear that viewpoint in the appropriate committees of the General Assembly, and we do recognize that some change in normal procedures is required to hear it in the plenary Assembly instead. We are, however, prepared to accept that change on this occasion, since this vital issue is being discussed in the plenary Assembly only, and the alternative would have been to exclude the viewpoint of the PLO entirely.

133. However, we do not necessarily regard the draft resolution just adopted as a precedent to be applied to other liberation movements. The Palestine case is, we believe, *sui generis*.

134. We also wish publicly to make it clear that we are not taking a position on the substance of the issues we shall later debate here or, indeed, committing ourselves to the proposition that the PLO is the sole representative of the Palestine people. We are, however, in the light of point 4 of the statement of 6 November 1973 by the nine member Governments of EEC, committed to the view that account must be taken of the legitimate rights of the Palestine people in the interests of establishing a just and durable peace. In a debate of that kind, we are prepared to hear without prejudice those whose claim to speak for them has been put forward by the great majority of the Arab States.

135. Mr. KAUFMANN (Netherlands): The Netherlands Government has, through the declaration of 6 November 1973 by the nine members of EEC, explicitly confirmed the necessity, in the process of achieving a durable and just peace, of considering the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

136. In the view of the Netherlands Government, the question of Palestine is of essential significance for a comprehensive solution of the Middle East problem. The Netherlands Government wishes to recall that, in accordance with Security Council resolution 242 (1967), that solution should encompass guarantees for the existence of the States of that region within secure and recognized boundaries.

137. The Netherlands delegation voted for the inscription of the question of Palestine on the agenda of this session of the General Assembly in order for there to be an opportunity for a general debate in the United Nations on this question. The Netherlands delegation is of the opinion that in the course of that debate the voice of the Palestinians should be heard also. However, the Netherlands delegation abstained in the vote on the text of the draft resolution because the proposal to grant the PLO the right to speak in plenary meetings is contrary to the traditional practice that only representatives of Governments have the right to speak in plenary meetings of the General Assembly.

138. Moreover, the draft resolution raises important political issues on which the General Assembly cannot give a view until after the completion of the debate on the substance of the agenda item.

139. The Netherlands delegation wishes to stress that its abstention cannot in any way be interpreted as taking a position on the substance of the problem, which will be discussed at a later stage.

140. Mr. RETTEL (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): At this time I need not state in detail my country's position on the Palestine question, which, on 6 November last, was the object of an official declaration within the framework of the political co-operation of countries members of EEC. We remain convinced that a peaceful solution in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) is not possible without a satisfactory settlement of the Palestinian question, and accordingly, it will certainly be useful to hear the views of the representatives of the PLO.

141. My delegation's abstention on draft resolution A/L.736 and Add.1 and 2 therefore does not constitute a change in policy, but was based on the legal reservations already referred to by several previous speakers, and on a desire not to prejudge the question before its substance has been debated.

142. Mr. LONGERSTAEY (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): The draft resolution just adopted deals only with a procedural matter. Our vote cannot, therefore, be construed as indicating a definite position on the question of substance. To avoid any possible misunderstanding, I should like to repeat that the Belgian Government has on a number of occasions—and recently during the general debate of the General Assembly—affirmed that no peace can be sought in the Middle East without due regard for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and no agreement can be reached unless that fundamental question is resolved.

143. The resolution is not in accordance with the practice of the General Assembly that only the representatives of States can be heard in plenary meetings. Since we attach great importance to that rule, my country was prompted to abstain in the vote. It goes without saying that we would have liked to have representatives of the Palestinian people heard in the First Committee. At any rate, our vote cannot be considered as reflecting any judgement on the question of the representation of the Palestinian people.

144. Mr. MALDONADO AGUIRRE (Guatemala) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is my country's wish that international disputes of a serious nature be solved by the peaceful means stipulated by international law and the ethical standards of universal coexistence. We believe that the opening of negotiations and dialogue are the proper way to achieve peace. Accordingly, we favour any initiative to improve conditions for an exchange of views and for a calm discussion by the parties to a dispute. However, we have some doubts as to whether or not the draft resolution we adopted introduces a change in the spirit of the Charter. If it does, we would be assuming a constitutional power for which we lack all authority. Therefore, we abstained in the vote.

145. We sincerely hope that the draft resolution that was adopted will effectively contribute to the aim of peace and that this rostrum can be opened to an objective discussion of problems without verbal violence, without prejudice or discrimination in any form, and in strict respect for the purpose and principles of the United Nations, particularly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

146. Mr. SCALI (United States of America): It should be clear from many statements by my Government over the past months and years that our vote today in no way reflects a lack of understanding or sympathy for the very real concerns and yearning for justice of the Palestinian people. Rather, it reflects our consistent conviction that the justice they seek will come only as part of a peace that is just for all the parties. This just peace must be negotiated with utmost care and must lead to an over-all settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, at the heart of which, we all recognize, lies the Palestinian problem.

147. Our vote also reflects a deep concern that the draft resolution just adopted could be interpreted by some as prejudging that negotiating process and as making a durable settlement more difficult to achieve. In that sense the resolution could have the ultimate effect of working against the interests of a Palestinian settlement.

148. The world knows how tirelessly we have sought to move the Middle East from the scourge of war to the path of peace. For us to have voted other than we did would be inconsistent with and harmful to our efforts to help promote a just and lasting peace that takes into account the legitimate needs of all the States and peoples in the Middle East.

149. I should also like to express my Government's profound concern over the departure in the resolution from the long-standing precedent that only representatives of Governments should be allowed to participate in the deliberations of the plenary Assembly. Have we created a dangerous precedent which may return to haunt this Organization, perhaps cripple its effectiveness?

150. I want to make clear that the only basis for a just negotiated settlement is and must remain Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The draft resolution adopted today cannot alter that basis and our efforts will go forward in that established and widely accepted framework.

151. Mr. TELLMANN (Norway): My delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution inviting the PLO to participate in the debate on the question of Palestine. Our vote is based on the well-known position of my Government, which is to give representatives of the peoples concerned the opportunity to express their views on matters of direct interest to them. The Norwegian delegation regards this resolution as a procedural resolution which in no way prejudices our position on the substance of the item later to be dealt with by the General Assembly. Our vote does not signify a position as to whether the PLO has an exclusive right to represent the Palestinian people.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Second Session, Plenary Meetings, 127th meeting.*

<sup>2</sup> *Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-eighth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1973, document S/11081. Also circulated as a General Assembly document under the symbol A/9288.*