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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 27 July 2000, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Mbayu (Vice-President) (Cameroon)

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In the absence of Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia), Mr. Mbayu (Cameroon), (Vice-President), took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)
(A/55/60-E/2000/17 and E/2000/45)

(b) Public administration and finance (*continued*)
(E/2000/66)

(c) Water supply and sanitation (*continued*)
(A/55/65-E/2000/19)

(e) Population and development (*continued*)
(E/2000/25)

(g) International cooperation in tax matters
(*continued*) (E/1999/84 and Corr.1 and E/2000/96)

1. **Mr. Raichev** (Bulgaria) said that his country had been seriously and directly affected by the implementation of Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), Iraq and Libya, having sustained losses amounting to more than ten billion dollars. While strictly observing such sanctions, Bulgaria had consistently supported the opinion that the application of measures under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations must be accompanied by concerted efforts to prevent negative repercussions on third States or assisting such States promptly and effectively in overcoming them.

2. Various resolutions, decisions and reports on the subject in recent years had indicated considerable progress in identifying the core aspects of the problem and devising mechanisms for its resolution. However too little had been done to implement recommendations submitted for that purpose. In that context, Bulgaria fully endorsed the recommendation contained in paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 54/107 on the role of United Nations bodies in mobilizing and monitoring economic assistance to States with special economic problems arising from sanctions. It also endorsed the request in paragraph 3 that the Secretariat should develop adequate capacity and appropriate modalities, technical procedures and guidelines in accordance with General Assembly resolutions on the subject.

3. The role of the Council was particularly important in that connection, and Bulgaria looked forward to the Secretary-General's views on the

deliberations and main findings, including the recommendations of the ad hoc expert group. His delegation would shortly be introducing a draft resolution of a procedural nature on assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions, which he hoped would receive the support of the Council.

4. **Mr. Kuchynsky** (Observer for Ukraine) said that considerable economic losses to the Ukrainian economy as a result of the imposition of sanctions had been exacerbated by the destruction of bridges and the disruption of commercial traffic on the river Danube.

5. General Assembly resolutions that had addressed the question of Article 50 not only had reaffirmed the important role of the Council in mobilizing and monitoring assistance but had also provided the Council with a specific mandate to review, within its competence, the implementation of Charter provisions related to assistance to third States. Accordingly, it was high time that the Council provided the General Assembly with clear guidance on the subject.

6. The draft resolution to which the representative of Bulgaria had referred was balanced and non-controversial and was based on General Assembly and Council resolutions and decisions, taking fully into account recent developments in the field of sanctions. He therefore hoped that it would be adopted by the Council on the basis of consensus.

7. **Mr. Amaziane** (Morocco), speaking with reference to document E/2000/66, said that his Government endorsed the recommendations of the Group of Experts, especially with regard to recommendation 13, which urged that the United Nations should provide support to African Governments in the development of their charter on public service at the national level and encourage similar initiatives in other regions. He hoped that the experience of the African countries would serve to inspire a broad process of consultation in international public administration systems. His Government favoured periodic reviews of the public sector and raising awareness among international public opinion, possibly through the proclamation of a public service day to focus attention on the public administration sector and the civil service.

8. **Mr. Doutriaux** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union and the associated countries Cyprus and Turkey, said that

population, gender and development were closely linked, especially when gender equality was considered an essential component of a global strategy to achieve the agreed objectives of the major conferences. The European Union fully supported all approaches reaffirming the inalienable and indivisible nature of the rights of women. Clearly, there was a long way to go before women would enjoy all rights, including those pertaining to sexuality and reproductive health, and before all forms of violence directed against them would be overcome.

9. Referring to Commission on Population and Development resolution 2000/1, he reaffirmed the prime importance of paragraphs 1 and 2, which requested the Population Division to continue to incorporate gender perspectives in its research on population policies, to pay particular attention to the gender dynamics and demographic implications of the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and to improve the statistical analysis of all forms of discrimination against women. The European Union considered that the Population Division had a key role to play in encouraging the development of data disaggregated by age and sex and of evaluations of the impact of public policies on gender equality. In gender dynamics, it was important to work towards the empowerment of women. Attention should be paid to gender in all development policies as a means of strengthening women's participation in political life and their access to positions of responsibility in the workplace. The trend towards the feminization of poverty should be reversed, especially by providing girls with greater access to education. Girls and boys should receive sex education, with a view to reducing teenage pregnancy and should benefit from reproductive health care, provided confidentially if necessary.

10. **Mr. Weibgen** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)), speaking on agenda item 13 (c), said that the report on water supply and sanitation (A/55/65-E/2000/19) would be improved if it were more explicit about the roles and responsibilities of the agricultural sector in working with municipalities, local authorities and traditional communities. For example, it should include an economic appraisal of the opportunity costs of the water resource base, the identification of competition between agricultural production and water supply, an

examination of the role of economic instruments in water resource allocation for agriculture, an assessment of source vulnerabilities in rural and urban settings, and so forth.

11. **Mr. Suazo** (Honduras), speaking with reference to document E/2000/66, said that his delegation fully endorsed recommendation 4, which called for the strengthening of relations and interactions between the Group of Experts and intergovernmental bodies such as the Council. Recommendation 14, which concerned the United Nations On-line Network of Regional Institutions for Capacity-Building in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN), also deserved the attention and support of the Council. He regretted the fact that there had not been an opportunity during the high-level segment for a presentation of the objectives of UNPAN, which included the creation of opportunities for South-South cooperation in the field of public administration. In that regard, he was curious to know when UNPAN would be fully operational.

12. He wished to draw attention to recommendation 16, in which the Group of Experts urged the United Nations to assist Governments in adjusting their economic governance systems in response to globalization. Developing economies needed to meet certain conditionalities in order to optimize the use of their resources and, to that end, he believed capacity-building to be a highly important tool.

13. **Mr. Hirata** (Japan), referring to item 13 (g) on international cooperation in tax matters, said that paragraph 40 of the Secretary-General's report (E/1999/84 and Corr.1) did not accurately reflect the action of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on the United Nations Model Double Taxation Convention between Developed and Developing Countries (revised version). He was therefore pleased to note the intention of the Secretariat to correct the paragraph in question. With that understanding, his delegation had no objection to action by the Council on the report.

14. **Ms. Onoh** (Observer for Nigeria), said that the Group of 77 and China welcomed Commission on Population and Development resolution 2000/1, which in its preamble reaffirmed the key actions for further implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action relating to gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women. The Group of 77 also welcomed the Commission's decision to make "Population, education and development" its special

theme for its thirty-sixth session, given that all rights were wasted without knowledge.

15. While appreciating the need to secure rights for youths and adolescents, the Group of 77 believed that such rights should be without prejudice to the rights of parents and should take into account cultural values. The Group of 77 was pleased at the high profile given to HIV/AIDS and hoped that efforts would be made, particularly with respect to financing, to facilitate the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

16. She urged partners to meet their agreed targets for official development assistance and expressed gratitude to those donors who had met or exceeded their targets. In conclusion, she expressed the hope that future sessions of the Commission would focus on women more as individuals and less as “reproducing machines” and reiterated that, without education, the development of all societies would be stalled.

17. **Mr. Bertucci** (Director of the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration) said that the United Nations On-line Network of Regional Institutions for Capacity-Building in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN), referred to by the representative of Honduras, would be operational in September 2000. Both hardware and software were in place, and a package of assistance to regional centres had already been developed.

18. In response to comments by the representative of Japan, in the corrigendum to E/1999/84 (E/1999/84/Corr.1), after the word “thereafter” at the beginning of the second sentence of the new paragraph 40, the following phrase would be inserted: “taking fully into account the fact that some members expressed their desire that the report be as accurate as possible, ...”.

19. **Mr. Heligman** (Chief of the Population Studies Branch, Population Division), responding to comments by delegations, said that the Population Division looked forward to working with the European Union, the Group of 77 and other groups, member States and other participants in the Commission on Population and Development, both during and between its sessions. In its efforts to implement the programmes of action of the major United Nations conferences of the 1990s, the Division would be cooperating with the secretariats of the other functional commissions and of

the conferences. The Division would continue to strengthen the integration of gender concerns in its work in close collaboration with the Statistics Division, the Division for the Advancement of Women and other units in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. One of the major benefits of integrating those divisions into one department had been the facilitation of such collaboration.

20. The Population Division was hopeful that the deliberations of the Commission on Population and Development in 2001 would help to clarify the linkages between population, environment and development and the role of the Division in that important but controversial area.

21. As the representative of Nigeria had pointed out on behalf of the Group of 77, education, particularly women’s education, was a key factor in all population trends, from mortality and health to fertility and family planning. It had been a timely decision by the Commission to choose as its theme for 2003 “Population, education and development”. His Division also welcomed the emphasis on HIV/AIDS and was mindful of the Commission’s instructions to give particular attention to the demographic implications of the syndrome.

Recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Group of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance at its fifteenth meeting (E/2000/66)

22. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the eight recommendations requiring action by the Economic and Social Council contained in chapter II, section A, of the report (E/2000/66). It was his understanding that the recommendations had no programme budget implications and could be implemented within the existing budget of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

23. *Recommendations 1 to 8 were adopted.*

Recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the ninth meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters (E/1999/84 and Corr.1)

24. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the three recommendations contained in chapter VI,

paragraphs 45 to 47, of the report (E/1999/84 and Corr.1).

25. *The recommendations were adopted.*

Draft decision contained in the report on the thirty-third session of the Commission on Population and Development (E/2000/25)

26. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft decision entitled "Report of the Commission on Population and Development on its thirty-third session and provisional agenda for the thirty-fourth session of the Commission" contained in chapter I, section A, of the report of the Commission (E/2000/25).

27. *The draft decision was adopted.*

Implementation of the declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/55/72 and Corr. 1; A/55/137-E/2000/95 and A/55/144-E/2000/87; E/2000/68; E/2000/L.17)

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/55/84-E/2000/16; E/2000/L.16)

28. **Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla** (Acting Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples) said that the Special Committee had just concluded its session. Its detailed consideration of the situation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories had been aided by the up-to-date information obtained in the Pacific regional seminar organized by the Special Committee that had been held at Majuro, Marshall Islands, from 16 to 18 May 2000.

29. The International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, now drawing to a close, had proved to be a useful framework for advancing the process of decolonization. In the context of Decade activities, the Special Committee had initiated a dialogue with the administering Powers, encouraging them to develop programmes of work on a case-by-case basis, and was currently awaiting the proposed programmes for the

Territories of Pitcairn and American Samoa. It was therefore recommending to the General Assembly that it should declare a Second International Decade starting in 2001 (A/AC.109/2000/31).

30. In a resolution on the question of New Caledonia (A/AC.109/2000/25), the Special Committee welcomed the signing of the Nouméa Accord and noted the initiatives aimed at protecting the natural environment. In its resolution on the question of Tokelau (A/AC.109/2000/26), it acknowledged the account by the *Ulu-o-Tokelau* at the Pacific regional seminar on how the Modern House project was seen by Tokelauans as the means to achieving self-determination.

31. In its consolidated resolution on eleven Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/AC.109/2000/30), the Special Committee reaffirmed the inalienable right of the peoples of the Territories to self-determination. Among the problem areas identified, it expressed concern that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had listed some Non-Self-Governing Territories as harmful tax jurisdictions. It therefore called upon OECD to engage the concerned territorial Governments in a constructive dialogue and had requested the administering Power to assist in resolving the matter.

32. In the same resolution, the Special Committee called upon the administering Power to continue to assist the territorial Government of American Samoa in the economic and social development of the Territory, including measures to rebuild financial management capabilities; requested the administering Power and regional and international organizations to support the efforts of the territorial Government of St. Helena to reduce the high level of unemployment and address transport and communication problems; welcomed the assessment by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that considerable progress had been made in Anguilla in the domain of sustainable human development and preservation of the environment; requested the administering Power to elaborate programmes to alleviate the economic, social and environmental consequences of the closure of the military bases of the United States of America in Bermuda; requested the administering Power and the United Nations system to continue to provide assistance to the British Virgin Islands, bearing in mind its vulnerability to external factors; welcomed the implementation of cooperation frameworks for the Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands

designed to help develop national integrated development plans to determine national development priorities; called upon the administering Power to take into consideration the expressed will of the Chamorro people of Guam and to enter into negotiations; called upon the administering Power and the United Nations system to continue to provide urgent emergency assistance to alleviate the consequences of the volcanic eruption in Montserrat; welcomed the measures being taken by the territorial Government of the United States Virgin Islands to address the fiscal crisis and called upon the administering Power to provide every assistance, including debt relief; and called upon the administering Power to continue its discussions with representatives of the Pitcairn on how best to support its economic security.

33. For the first time in 28 years, it had unanimously adopted a resolution concerning Puerto Rico (A/AC.109/2000/24, in which, inter alia, it encouraged the Government of the United States of America to order the halt of its military drills and manoeuvres on Vieques Island, return the occupied land to the people of Puerto Rico, halt the persecution of peaceful demonstrators, respect fundamental human rights such as health and economic development and decontaminate the impact areas.

34. The Special Committee had formed a working group composed of members of the Committee who were also members of the Council to make recommendations and pave the way for a joint session of the two bodies. The Committee wished to work closely with the Council to strengthen the assistance of the United Nations system to the Non-Self-Governing Territories to promote their economic and social development.

35. **Ms. Pérez Berra** (Cuba), speaking on behalf of the sponsors, announced that Algeria, Benin, Bolivia, China, Colombia, Fiji, Indonesia, Iraq, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands and Viet Nam had joined the sponsors of draft resolution E/2000/L.17, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations". It was based on the resolution adopted by consensus by the Special Committee at its recent session (A/AC.109/2000/29) and represented an updated version of the resolution adopted by the Council the year before.

36. Promoting assistance to the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories was one of the responsibilities of the Council by virtue of Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations, which explicitly linked self-determination with economic and social progress. In view of the Council's moral commitment to colonial countries and peoples, her delegation hoped that the Council would adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

37. **Mr. Renninger** (Director of the Asia and the Pacific Division, Department of Political Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/55/137-E/2000/95), said that the report had been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/116 and covered the period from May 1999 to May 2000. The main section of the report discussed the four themes of the Palestinian Development Plan: infrastructure and natural resources management, institutional capacity-building, human resources and social development, and productive sectors. Attention was given to measures to enhance reform of the public administration and strengthen the policy environment for private sector development and the growth of civil society. One of the aims of the report was to give recognition to the way the planning capacity of the Palestinian Authority had matured.

38. In the Secretary-General's view, the considerable official development assistance provided by the international community, approximately \$2.75 billion in the period 1993-1999, had resulted in very significant progress. Unfortunately, both new commitments and disbursements had been declining in recent years.

39. The description of the initiatives of the United Nations organizations in each sector of the Plan made it clear that collaboration and co-financing with other partners was on the increase. The importance of the United Nations coordinating role had been affirmed at the recent meeting held in Gaza between the Palestinian Authority, the entire United Nations team and bilateral and multilateral donor institutions.

40. **Mr. Awad** (Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), introducing the report prepared by ESCWA on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the

Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/55/84-E/2000/16), said that the report was submitted in response to Council resolution 1999/53 and General Assembly resolution 54/230. The information it contained came from a variety of sources, primarily the Israeli and Palestinian press.

41. Since 1967, the reports of the Secretary-General on the subject had registered the increasingly negative repercussions of occupation on the land, natural resources and environment, and on people's lives and livelihoods. Delayed or partial implementation of agreements and Israeli practices, notably expansion of Israeli settlements and closure of passage routes from areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority, aggravated the situation.

42. The geographic distribution of Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories severely restricted the growth of Palestinian communities. Settlements had continued to expand during the first months of the new Government. Thousands of units of new construction had been approved, and thousands of acres of Palestinian land had been confiscated. There were currently no restrictions on settlement expansion in East Jerusalem.

43. Israeli occupation had contaminated the drinking water supply in many Palestinian villages to the point of endangering health. The occupation had also inhibited investment and growth by creating uncertainty about the status of the territory and by restricting the movement of goods and people.

44. In the occupied Syrian Golan, the number of Israeli settlers had increased by some 18 per cent since 1994, and the authorities had plans to allocate agricultural land to the settlements. Employment opportunities for the Arab population were limited to unskilled and semi-skilled daily labour without employment benefits. Moreover, the Syrian Arab population suffered from wage disparities. Official measures limited access to education.

45. Until an enduring peace based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations was established, the issues under consideration would continue to be troubling to the region and the world at large.

46. **Mr. Shobokshi** (Saudi Arabia), in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group, introduced the draft resolution contained in document E/2000/L.16 and said that Indonesia, Qatar and Libya, had joined the list of

sponsors. On behalf of the sponsors, he urged the Council to adopt the resolution by consensus.

47. **Mr. Aala** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation would have preferred the report (A/55/84-E/2000/16) to have gone into more detail on the Golan. The continuing Israeli occupation of Arab lands was one of the most serious issues before the United Nations on the threshold of the millennium. The record of Israeli actions spoke for itself, and the report shed new light on the effect of continuing Israeli occupation and expansion of colonialist settlement on the Palestinian people and the citizens of the occupied Syrian Golan. Israel's policies had led to deterioration of the economic, social and ecological environment in the occupied lands.

48. Only days after the aggression of 5 June 1967 Israel had begun to pursue a two-pronged policy, the first part of which was aimed at land and the second at people. The Knesset had annexed the Golan on 14 December 1981, a move which the Security Council had immediately condemned in its resolution 497 (1981). The Israeli Government had seized virtually all land in the Golan and destroyed many villages and farms. Israel had to that point evicted 130,000 Syrians to make room for its colonialist settlements and had showed every intention of continuing that practice, in spite of the commencement of the peace process based on Security Council resolutions and the land for peace principle with a view to Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

49. Israel's colonialist settlement policy since 1967 had met with worldwide condemnation for its contravention of international law and the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and its violation of Security Council resolutions 446 (1979) and 465 (1980), which declared that Israel's colonialist policy and practice was illegal and an obstacle to peace in the region.

50. The Syrian Arab Republic had made a strategic choice for peace on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions and the principle of land for peace, which required Israel's complete withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 and a guarantee of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people.

51. **Mr. Al-Hadid** (Observer for Jordan) said that the policy of successive Israeli Governments of using

settlements to alter the demographic makeup of the occupied Arab territories was in contravention of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and the will of the international community. In particular it was a violation of Security Council resolution 446 (1979), which condemned Israel's settlement policy as illegal and called it an obstacle to peace, and Security Council resolution 465 (1980), which called upon Israel to cease the construction of new settlements and dismantle existing ones.

52. The Israeli settlements had a number of destructive economic, social and environmental effects on the Palestinian people and its economy. Palestinian towns were surrounded by neighbouring Israeli settlements. The confiscation of large tracts of land had harmed the Palestinian agricultural sector. There were constant clashes between Israelis and Palestinians. The settlements received more than their share of local water resources. In general, Israel overused water resources while denying Palestinians access to them.

53. The report (A/55/84-E/2000/16) indicated that the various types of environmental laws were enforced much less rigorously in the occupied territory than in Israel and that a number of pollution-producing industries had been established there. Israel tried to prevent contact between the Palestinian economy and the rest of the Arab world in order to keep the Palestinian economy dependent on the Israeli economy and to monopolize the Palestinian market.

54. In the Golan Israel provided incentives and investment to Israeli settlers while subjecting Arab residents to limitations on employment and education. Arab residents were restricted to unskilled day labour without benefits or health insurance, and there was a huge gap between Palestinian and Israeli wages.

55. Over the years Jordan had worked hard for the sake of a comprehensive and lasting peace that would allow all the peoples of the region to benefit from development and stability. Jordan called on the international community to supply economic aid and foreign investment to improve the economy and living conditions of the Palestinians. Jordan also called on Israel to stop building new settlements and expanding existing ones, since settlements were an obstacle to peace and development, as well as being illegal, and to adhere to the agreements concluded with the Palestinian Authority.

56. **Mr. Saleh** (Bahrain) said that the residents of the Israeli occupied territories and the Syrian Golan continued to suffer economically and socially from the Israeli occupation. The settlement policy of the Barak Government was just one example of how Israel was trying to renege on agreements it had concluded with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Settlement construction in the West Bank had proceeded rapidly, with many new units being built. There were now about 400,000 Israelis living in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan. Land was still being confiscated from Palestinians for Israeli settlements.

57. Israel was continuing to apply its regrettable policies of destroying Palestinian houses, especially in Jerusalem and Hebron. Even places of worship were not immune. The occupying authorities arrested Palestinians for trying to farm their own land or use their own water. While the settlers prospered, the Palestinians lived in poverty. Many Palestinian infants got sick from polluted water. Environmental laws were not observed with the same strictness in the occupied territories as in Israel.

58. The international community needed to put genuine pressure on Israel to obey international law. Israel must withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories: the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan. Peace could only be achieved on the basis of the land for peace principle and respect for international law. Any just and comprehensive peace should also guarantee the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their lands and homes. Israel needed to fulfil its commitments and renounce its obduracy in order to advance the peace process and ensure the return of peace and security to the region.

59. **Mr. Rahmtalla** (Sudan) said that his delegation wished to become a sponsor of draft resolution E/2000/L.17.

60. Paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's note (A/55/84-E/2000/16) indicated that Israel was failing to carry out its agreements with the PLO. Israel was expanding its settlements, and closing passage routes between Israel and Palestinian-controlled areas, which had deleterious effects on Palestinian living conditions. Paragraph 57 drew attention to the limitations on job opportunities that resulted from the separation of the occupied Syrian Golan from the rest of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Israeli occupation had led to a decline in

economic, ecological and social infrastructure. Israel should not be allowed to continue to shirk its responsibilities and place obstacles in the way of peace.

61. **Mr. Gamaleldin** (Observer for Egypt) said that Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, were illegal. The Palestinian people and the Syrians of the occupied Golan had a right to sovereignty over their natural and economic resources. Egypt had been the first country to make the strategic choice for peace under the late President Anwar al-Sadat. Peace could only be achieved on the basis of full respect for international law as embodied in resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and other relevant resolutions, the principle of land for peace, the right of all peoples in the region to security, and the fulfilment of agreements concluded since the Madrid Conference. The Egyptian Government and people called on the international community to support peace efforts and to offer aid to the Palestinian Authority to help its people exchange the years-long foreign occupation for the opportunity to resume its rightful role in the history of the Middle East. Egypt hoped that the prospects of peace and development would dawn in that region, which was the cradle of the three revealed religions, and that it would become a model for peaceful coexistence among the various cultures and religions.

62. **Mr. Jilani** (Observer for Palestine) noted the late issuance, in English only, of the report on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/55/137-E/2000/95).

63. The Middle East peace summit hosted by President Clinton at Camp David had ended two days previously without reaching the long-awaited peace agreement between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. The unsuccessful conclusion was due to Israel's intransigence and its attempts to dictate terms that contravened the relevant United Nations resolutions and undermined the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to an independent State with East Jerusalem as the capital.

64. The issues at the heart of the Israeli peace negotiations had been the fate of the occupied Palestinian territory, the illegal Israeli settlements, the fate of more than three and a half million Palestinian refugees, Jerusalem, water, and the final borders. Those issues affected every aspect of Palestinian life, material and spiritual, including national existence and identity,

economic and social well-being, and the preservation of cultural and religious sites.

65. International law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as the terms of reference of the Middle East peace process and the signed agreements, clearly set out the basis for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. The fundamental principles included bringing to an end the illegal Israeli occupation, the realization of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and property or to receive compensation. The observance of those principles was crucial for a just and lasting peace in the region.

66. Over the past three decades, Israel, the occupying Power, had defied the international community and violated every applicable principle of international law. It had stubbornly pursued a policy of Judaization of the Holy City of Jerusalem by altering, or attempting to alter, the legal status of the city, its religious and cultural character, and its demographic composition. It had also pursued a policy of annexation and appropriation of Palestinian land and property and of building Israeli settlements in order to prevent the Palestinian people from exercising their legitimate right to self-determination. The failure of the peace process was due solely to such illegal policies and actions, which had been condemned and rejected by the whole international community.

67. The Palestinian people and leadership had compromised a great deal. They had accepted the division of historic Palestine into two States: the Jewish State of Israel and the long-awaited independent State of Palestine. They had also accepted the establishment of the Palestinian State in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, which comprised only 22 per cent of mandated Palestine. Israel, on the other hand, would retain 78 per cent, even though General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 had assigned to the Jewish State only 54 per cent of mandated Palestine.

68. Unfortunately, the illegal Israeli policies continued to have effects that were deleterious to the peace process and the growing trust between the two peoples. Even as the two parties had negotiated, the current Israeli Government had continued to allow the building and expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, at

an unprecedented level exceeding even the level under the previous right-wing Government.

69. The Palestinian people and leadership remained committed to the peace process and to the goal of reaching a peaceful negotiated settlement, within the time frame set out in the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, namely by 13 September 2000. They also believed that a lasting and just peace should be based on the principles of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions that required Israel to withdraw from all Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, and to recognize the right of return of Palestinian refugees and its moral and legal responsibility for the plight of the Palestinian people.

70. They pledged their commitment to continue the negotiations on the basis of international legality and the existing agreements between the two sides.

71. **Mr. Adam** (Observer for Israel) said that the draft resolution submitted to the Council in document E/2000/L.16 did not belong in the current forum and was not fit subject-matter for its deliberations. The framework for resolving the very specific issues between the Israelis and the Palestinians had always been, and must remain, direct negotiations, which had given birth to every step forward in the peace process until the present time. The integrity of that framework had to be preserved, as the two sides embarked on the critical stage of reaching a final agreement.

72. The draft resolution cited misrepresented the economic situation among the Palestinians in the West Bank. According to a report issued by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the Palestinian economy had actually surpassed the estimates of both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Palestinian Finance Ministry. The real growth of gross national product for 1999 had actually been 2 per cent higher than estimated, and the report also stated that most macroeconomic indicators showed progress. They included an increase in labour flows to Israel, an increase in the value of registered Israeli-Palestinian trade, an increase in planned construction, significant growth in new company registrations, an increase in outstanding bank credit to private businesses, and an increase in donor assistance. The report found that private sector employment had increased, as unemployment rates continued to decline from

previous years, and that daily and monthly wages had increased.

73. According to a book published by the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics had reported that more hospitals, roads and telephone lines had been laid, more tourists had visited Palestine and more children had attended and succeeded in school in recent months than in previous years.

74. Israel supported those economic improvements and was committed to the value of an improved Palestinian economy and a more prosperous society. Israel joined the Secretary-General in calling for donors to contribute to projects for the Palestinian people. Despite unemployment in Israel and a yearly influx of foreign workers from abroad, the Palestinian employment rate had been maintained and even expanded. Israel currently employed 120,000 Palestinians, almost a quarter of the workforce of the Palestinian Authority.

75. To say that there was deterioration in the economic and living conditions of the Palestinian people was simply false. Indeed, the per capita gross national product of the Palestinian people was higher than that of all the 48 least developed countries, which made up one tenth of the world's population. He wondered why the Palestinian economy should be the sole focus of the Council's discussions, when the Council normally reviewed economic crises affecting many States.

76. Lastly, he expressed the hope that the improved economic conditions of the Palestinians — the rising employment, the growing corporate sector, the enhanced opportunities, the increasing salaries — would lead to a new spirit of goodwill and cooperation between the parties to the peace process.

77. **Mr. Gallagher** (United States of America) agreed with the view that, until peace was achieved and proved enduring, the issues under consideration would continue to be very troubling, both to the region and to the world at large. The parties had agreed to deal with the outstanding issues through direct negotiation, making the involvement of the Council inappropriate and at worst counterproductive. Following the Camp David meeting, the parties and the United States had recommitted themselves to continuing negotiations. Given the delicate stage of those negotiations, action under the current agenda item did not seem

appropriate, and he therefore urged that it should be deferred.

78. **Ms. Onoh** (Observer for Nigeria), referring to draft resolution E/2000/L.17, which Nigeria would like to co-sponsor, said that his Government attached great importance to the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples and was saddened to have to still address that matter. It trusted that in the new millennium all peoples would be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination and rule themselves in any way they chose.

79. **Mr. Moniaga** (Indonesia) said that he supported the efforts of ESCWA to promote and improve the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people. Since the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements on 13 September 1993, the international community had had great hopes of significant economic transformation in Palestine. Unfortunately, the new relationship between Israel and the Palestinian Authority established by the Protocol on Economic Relations which had promised to open borders and enable goods and labour to flow easily had never achieved the desired effect.

80. The Palestinian people continued to bear the harsh burden of occupation and suffer from high rates of unemployment and poverty. In March 2000, further restrictions had been imposed on the movement of goods. The issue of settlements also remained a stumbling block to stabilizing the political situation and to the social and economic development of the Palestinian people. The construction of new settlements in East Jerusalem was an additional problem, which could affect the territorial integrity of Palestine well into the future.

81. Despite the current difficult conditions of the Palestinian people, his delegation maintained its optimism that a just and lasting peace could be achieved to the benefit of all parties. The Wye River Memorandum had signalled the beginning of a new era of rapprochement, and he emphasized the vital importance that should be attached to the operation and construction of the seaport in Gaza, which would be a recognizable contribution to the Palestinian economy. The Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum had given renewed hope that the stalemate could be overcome and the peace process brought back on track. More recently, the return of the parties to Camp David and the

marathon negotiations that had taken place had brought the region closer to achieving a lasting peace than ever before. There had been a number of areas where the two sides had lessened their differences. He could only hope that the breakdown in negotiations would not lead to a new cycle of violence and further infractions of the rights of the Palestinian people. Progress was also still needed with regard to the occupied Syrian Golan.

82. Clearly, the United Nations had a central role to play in the social and economic development of Palestine. As they moved into the final stages of the peace process, that role would gain additional prominence. Indonesia would work to uphold the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The recent decision of the negotiators to resume their efforts was a most positive and welcome sign. He hoped that a peace agreement could be achieved in a short time and looked forward to the day when the legitimate sovereign and development rights of the Palestinian people were secure.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.