**Mr. Abbas**:

1. I would like to start by congratulating Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa on her election to preside over this session and to wish her success in achieving the objectives of the United Nations, which are accepted by all nations of the world, which believe that the Organization was created to safeguard international peace, human rights, and the right of peoples to self-determination.
2. Indeed, as President Woodrow Wilson said in his first inaugural address:
3. “Nowhere else in the world have noble men and women exhibited in more striking forms the beauty and the energy of sympathy and helpfulness and counsel in their efforts to rectify wrong, alleviate suffering, and set the weak in the way of strength and hope.”
4. I hope, therefore, that this session will promote cooperation between nations and peoples in pursuit of their common interests, namely the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which form the basis for membership in this Organization.
5. We must commend highly the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the effective role he has played and the considerable efforts he has deployed, as well as for his wise leadership in enhancing the United Nations and reinvigorating its role.
6. **We also commend him in particular for his efforts in respect of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine.**
7. Only a few weeks ago, the fires of war stopped raging in Lebanon.
8. Despite the gravity of the losses, the destruction and the tragedy, the international community expeditiously, effectively and successfully intervened to put an end to the war and to provide support to the people and the legitimate Government of Lebanon in order to safeguard its security and independence and to put an end to the era of wars on its land.
9. I commend the role played by the international community,
10. and I hope that that positive and effective intervention will be extended, politically and practically, so as to resolve the root causes of all the conflicts and wars that have plagued our region for many decades.
11. **Indeed, I need not reconfirm the fact that, after the experiences of war and suffering that we have been through, unless the question of Palestine and that of the continuing occupation of Palestinian and Arab lands since 1967 is resolved, the elements of tension and conflagration will keep the conflict alive and leave the door wide open to all forms of violence, terrorism, regional confrontations and global crises.**
12. **It is unfortunate today to see that international plans and initiatives, foremost among them the road map, which was endorsed by the United Nations Security Council, have reached a state of stagnation, even regression.**
13. **Calls for the resumption of negotiations are faced with preconditions.**
14. **Despair and frustration thrive in the midst of the roar of the bulldozers that are preparing for the construction of illegal settlements, changes in the demographic nature of Jerusalem and erection of an apartheid separation wall inside our occupied land and between its various parts.**
15. **They thrive on the continuation of the frightful siege, through military checkpoints that have turned our cities and provinces into reservations, on the continuous saga of killings and assassinations that have claimed hundreds of civilian lives, on the demolitions of homes and on the ongoing arrests of more than 8,000 Palestinians, including parliamentarians and cabinet ministers.**
16. **Some of the detained have been languishing for three decades, and their release and freedom are still eagerly awaited by their families and their people.**
17. **Under such conditions, I can reasonably ask: how can the international community expect extremism to retreat or the waves of violence to ebb?**
18. **How can we and all the forces of moderation and peace in our region forcefully intervene and convince our public opinion that there is hope on the horizon?**
19. **Or that the option of dialogue, negotiation and international legitimacy — which is our strategic choice and the path which we relentlessly advocate and which we will never abandon — will be fruitful and has a real chance of success?**
20. **Living in the midst of this tragedy, I am not the only one who must answer this fundamental question.**
21. **The whole international community, particularly influential Powers, is called upon to provide tangible evidence that it will support an unconditional resumption of negotiations and provide those negotiations with true international support to ensure their success through the cessation of settlement activity, collective punishment and separation walls.**
22. **This would provide a positive atmosphere for relaunching the negotiations and reaching the objectives of a just peace based on a two-State solution, as called for by President George Bush of the United States of America.**
23. **Such a solution must be based on international legitimacy, as stressed in the Arab Peace Initiative, through the establishment of the independent State of Palestine on the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and in reaching a just and agreed solution for the problem of the refugees — who constitute more than half of our Palestinian people — in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 194 of 11 December 1948.**
24. **Lately, we have heard from the Government of Israel that it will abandon its policy of unilateralism and one-sided actions.**
25. **This is encouraging, provided that the alternative is not stagnation or the imposition of faits accomplish on the ground, but rather a return to the negotiating table and to reaching a comprehensive solution to all of the permanent status issues in order to ensure a secure future for our children and theirs.**
26. Recently, in tandem with all the strands and persuasions of the Palestinian political spectrum, I have sought to establish a Government of national unity that is consistent with international and Arab legitimacy and that corresponds to the principles established by the Quartet.
27. **Based on our commitment to these criteria, I would like to reaffirm that any future Palestinian Government will commit to and abide by all the agreements that the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian National Authority have committed to in the past, particularly the letters of mutual recognition dated 9 September 1993 exchanged between the two late, great leaders, Yasser Arafat and Itzhak Rabin.**
28. **These two letters contain the mutual recognition by Israel and the PLO, the renunciation of violence and the adoption of negotiations as the path towards reaching a permanent solution leading to the establishment of the independent State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel.**
29. Any future Government will commit to imposing security and order, to ending the phenomenon of multiple militias, lack of discipline or chaos, and will commit to the rule of law, since this is primarily a national Palestinian need.
30. The efforts that we have exerted are for the sole purpose of establishing national unity that has real substance in order to achieve national Palestinian consensus around our national objectives, which comply with international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative and call for peaceful means for the realization of these objectives.
31. When such a national consensus is reached and a new national unity Government has been established according to it, it must be viewed as a qualitative achievement — not a step backwards or a limited regression from the path to which we have always been determinedly committed — even in the face of the bleakest of conditions.
32. **I would like to reiterate that negotiations with Israel have been and will remain under the jurisdiction and responsibility of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which I chair.**
33. **The outcome of these negotiations will be presented to the Palestinian National Council, the highest Palestinian national body, or to a national public referendum.**
34. **What we have achieved in this regard should suffice to lift the unjust siege imposed on our people.**
35. **That siege has inflicted extensive damage on our society, our livelihood and the means to our growth and progress.**
36. **Madam President, I come to you bearing the wounds of a people who are bleeding on a daily basis.**
37. **We are a people who seeks normal life, where our children can go safely to school, where children are born to live, not die;**
38. **where youth can find honourable and decent work that provides them with a dignified path to a secure future so that they can be partners in formulating their history, rather than be victims to the cruelty of history;**
39. **where women give birth in hospitals, not at the checkpoints of the occupation;**
40. **where families gather in the evening to dream of a new day, a day without killing, imprisonment or arrest.**
41. **I simply want tomorrow to be better than today.**
42. **I want my homeland, Palestine, to be a homeland, rather than a prison — independent and sovereign, like homelands of all other peoples of this world.**
43. **I want Jerusalem to be the point of convergence for the dialogue of all prophets and the capital of two States living side by side in peace and equality.**
44. **Thirty-two years ago, from this rostrum, the late President Yasser Arafat issued his famous and resounding call: “Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand”.**
45. **I now reiterate that call.**
46. **Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand.**
47. **I repeat: do not let the olive branch fall from my hand.**

**Ms. Livni**:

1. These days, the days of the general debate of the General Assembly, fall this year at a time of unique significance for the Jewish people.
2. They come on the eve of the Jewish New Year and the Day of Atonement and are known as the Days of Awe.
3. In Jewish tradition, these are days of soul-searching and prayer, of judgement and of renewal.
4. That concept of reflection is fitting not just for the faithful.
5. It should be a time of reflection for nations as well.
6. Let us use this time and this gathering to look deeply and honestly at the world in which we live — the world as it is and as it might be.
7. The United Nations emerged from the horrors of war and offered a vision of a new and peaceful world,
8. but we see the suffering of the people of Darfur,
9. we see bloodshed and violence across the globe,
10. and we know that that is not yet the world in which we live.
11. Our planet remains torn by conflict.
12. At its heart, this is a conflict about values — a battle of ideas.
13. It is a conflict about whether to respect or to reject the other — a conflict between tolerance and tyranny, between the promise of coexistence and the hopelessness of hate.
14. We see it played out in internet chat rooms and in houses of prayer, in classrooms and newsrooms, on the battlefield and in the corridors of power.
15. It is the challenge of our time.
16. **We, the people of Israel, have lived for many years on the frontlines of this conflict.**
17. **Our nation has felt its fury;**
18. **our soldiers have fought and died in its battles.**
19. **An ancient people in the heart of the Middle East — great in history but small in number — we have been a constant target of those that oppose our very existence.**
20. **We face this conflict on different fronts — as Jews against the dark forces of anti-Semitism, as Israelis against the enemies of our statehood, and as members of the free world against the merchants of global terror.**
21. **We have been guided in this conflict by two core values that are embodied in our declaration of independence and shape our national identity.**
22. **The first is that Israel, with Jerusalem at its heart, is the national homeland of the Jewish people, their refuge from persecution, their first and last line of defence.**
23. **The second is that Israel is a democracy and that the values of justice, peace and humanity — first expressed by the prophets of Israel — are an integral part of our nation’s sense of mission.**
24. **We share the same values as the community of democratic States.**
25. **We are ready and proud to be judged by them.**
26. **They are our own.**
27. **But too often there is a gap between perception and reality.**
28. **Too often, Israel is not seen for its unique creativity and spirit of enterprise, or for its contribution — well beyond its size — to the sciences and to literature, to human development and innovation.**
29. **In many parts of the world, we are seen mainly through the lens of the Arab-Israeli conflict.**
30. **And too often, that lens is distorted.**
31. **To many, this conflict is portrayed as a clash of David and Goliath, with Israel perceived unjustly as Goliath, but this simplistic image ignores the fact that Israel remains a threatened democracy in a hostile region.**
32. **We have, of necessity, the capacity to defend ourselves,**
33. **but we will always be constrained in its use by our values.**
34. **And yet, we face an enemy willing to use all the means at its disposal to kill without restraint and without distinction.**
35. **Every innocent casualty in this conflict is a tragedy.**
36. **There is no difference between the tears of a grieving Israeli mother and a grieving Palestinian mother,**
37. **but there is a critical moral difference between the terrorists who hunt down civilians and the soldiers who target terrorists while trying to avoid civilian casualties.**
38. **To protect its integrity, the international community must uphold that basic moral distinction.**
39. **Terror is terror, even when it is called resistance.**
40. **It cannot be justified and it cannot be equated with the actions of those seeking only to defend themselves against it.**
41. **If we want to protect our values, it is not enough to believe in them — we must act according to them.**
42. There is no greater challenge to our values than that posed by the leaders of Iran.
43. They deny and mock the Holocaust.
44. They speak proudly and openly of their desire to wipe Israel off the map.
45. And now, by their actions, they pursue the weapons to achieve that objective, to imperil the region and to threaten the world.
46. The moment of truth is here.
47. The international community is faced with no greater responsibility than to stand against that dark and growing danger — not for Israel’s sake, but for its own;
48. for the sake of the values it claims to embrace;
49. for the sake of the world we all wish our children to inherit.
50. What more needs to happen for the world to take the threat seriously?
51. What more needs to happen to end the hesitation and the excuses?
52. We know the lessons of the past.
53. We know the consequences of appeasement and indifference.
54. There is no place for such leaders in this forum.
55. There is no place for such a regime in the family of nations.
56. For any who still had doubts, the Iranian threat was exposed to all in the recent conflict in Lebanon.
57. Armed, financed and directed by Iran, Hizbullah kidnapped Israeli soldiers and targeted Israeli cities,
58. but it was the hopes of an entire region that they sought to take hostage.
59. Out of the conflict — and because of Israel’s response to it — opportunity has emerged, but much is needed to turn opportunity into reality.
60. Hizbullah can never again be allowed to threaten the future of the region.
61. The world faces a critical test — to ensure the full implementation of resolution 1701 and the immediate and safe release of the Israeli hostages.
62. As we gather here, we think of anxious families that ache for the return of their loved ones — parents waiting for a son, a brother for a brother, a wife for a husband.
63. Israel will not rest until all the Israeli hostages are returned safely to the arms of their devoted families and to the embrace of a loving nation.
64. Let us all make them the same promise today.
65. Last year, a great leader of Israel, Ariel Sharon, stood before this forum and said:
66. **“The Palestinians will always be our neighbours.**
67. **We respect them and have no aspirations to rule over them.**
68. **They are also entitled to freedom and to a national, sovereign existence in a State of their own.”**
69. **That was not only the voice and vision of one man.**
70. **It is the voice and vision of a nation.**
71. **We do not believe that Israeli-Palestinian relations are of necessity a zero-sum game.**
72. **Not every Israeli interest is at odds with Palestinian interests.**
73. **There is, in fact, a common vision that binds together Israelis, moderate Palestinians and the international community.**
74. **It serves the goals of both peoples and represents the basis of a genuine and lasting peace.**
75. **At its heart is the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.**
76. **Israel believes in this vision,**
77. **and from this vision we have drawn our principles for peace.**
78. **The first is inherent in the very idea of two States.**
79. **For the Jewish people, Israel was established to be our national homeland.**
80. **It was the solution for Jewish refugees and the realization of Jewish rights.**
81. **And this is the true calling of the future State of Palestine: a national homeland for the Palestinian people — the solution to Palestinian claims, the fulfilment of Palestinian dreams, the answer for Palestinian refugees, wherever they may be.**
82. **If Palestinian leaders are unwilling to say this, the world should say it for them.**
83. **Instead of giving false hope, it is time to end the exploitation of the refugee issue and to begin to resolve it on the basis of the vision of two States, two homelands.**
84. **That is the real and only meaning of the two-State vision.**
85. **It requires each people to accept that their rights are realized through the establishment of their own homeland, not in the homeland of others.**
86. **The second principle for peace is drawn from the concept of living in peace and security.**
87. **On the basis of this principle the international community has insisted that the State of Palestine that emerges next to Israel cannot be a terror State.**
88. **A terrorist State is the last thing our troubled region needs.**
89. **It is for that reason that the road map requires an end to terror.**
90. **It is for that reason that the international community has demanded that any Palestinian Government fulfil three basic conditions: renounce terrorism, recognize Israel’s right to exist and accept existing Israeli-Palestinian agreements.**
91. **Those conditions are not an obstacle to peace or to the establishment of a responsible Palestinian State;**
92. **they are a crucial ingredient for the realization of those goals.**
93. **An end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will also require agreement on a common boundary.**
94. **There are those who believe that if only we could turn back the hands of time to 1967 all would be resolved.**
95. **But, in 1967 there was no Palestinian State;**
96. **there was no link between the West Bank and Gaza;**
97. **and there was no commitment to lasting peace.**
98. **A two-State solution requires the creation of a new reality which never existed in the past.**
99. **For it to succeed, both sides will need to commit themselves to compromise and to believe in coexistence.**
100. **If only we could end the conflict today.**
101. **But we have learned from bitter experience that to reach lasting peace it is not enough to have a vision.**
102. **Peace must be built on the solid foundations of shared values, not the shifting sands of false promises.**
103. **Without this, the political horizon will always be out of reach.**
104. **We have seen negotiations doomed by mistrust and frustration.**
105. **We have seen them lay the ground for greater violence, not greater understanding.**
106. **We cannot afford to repeat that experience.**
107. **Unfortunately, the Palestinian Authority is dominated today by a terrorist organization that teaches children to hate and seeks to transform the conflict from a resolvable political dispute into an endless religious confrontation.**
108. **The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the consequence and not the cause of this ideology of intolerance and hatred.**
109. **We cannot reach peace by ignoring these realities.**
110. **We cannot find the solutions for tomorrow without addressing the problems of today.**
111. **But we also cannot give up hope, and I refuse to do so.**
112. **In a Middle East where being moderate is often the same as being weak, our challenge is to empower the peacemakers and disempower their opponents.**
113. **The road map phases and the three international conditions are designed precisely for that purpose.**
114. **But if the world hesitates in enforcing these standards, the extremists sense opportunity.**
115. **And if it appeases, they sense victory.**
116. **This is the moment for determination not half-measures and vague formulations.**
117. **It is the moment to demand that those Palestinian leaders that believe in peace determine the future on these terms, not on the terms of terrorists.**
118. **Unfortunately, there are no shortcuts on the road to peace.**
119. **But stagnation is not in our interest, and it is not our policy.**
120. **It is in this spirit that Israel embarked on the painful process of disengagement, to create an opportunity for progress.**
121. **But, sadly, we received terror in return.**
122. **And it is in this spirit that I met with Chairman Abbas two days ago, and we agreed to re-energize the dialogue between us and create a permanent channel to pursue ways to advance together.**
123. **The parties do not need another forum to act out their differences,**
124. **and the only forum that will resolve them is the bilateral negotiating table.**
125. **We have no illusions about the difficulties before us.**
126. **We must face them not ignore them.**
127. **But we can advance along the road to peace if we have the strength to defend its principles and the courage to confront its enemies.**
128. In these days, while Jews prepare to welcome a new year, Muslims around the world prepare for the holy month of Ramadan.
129. As two great faiths begin their annual journey of reflection and decision, let the nations of the world begin it too.
130. The Jewish prayers tell us that this is a time of decision not just for individuals but also for States: “which for the sword and which for peace, which for famine and which for plenty”.
131. Those are sobering words, but they are also empowering ones.
132. The message of these special days is that no future is predetermined, no conflict is inevitable.
133. It is up to us to make the right choices.
134. History will judge us by them.
135. In the words of the traditional greeting: may the curses of the last year end; may the blessing of the new year begin.
136. Shana tova: may it be a good year.