**Mr. Abbas**

1. It is a pleasure, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the Assembly at this session.
2. We have every hope that your efforts will be successful.
3. It is also a pleasure for me to convey our appreciation and pride to Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al‑Khalifa for the tremendous effort she undertook as President of the General Assembly at the sixty-first session.
4. I would like to take this opportunity to express our full confidence in the role of the United Nations and all of its specialized agencies with respect to their historic responsibilities regarding the Palestinian question, responsibilities they will continue to bear until this question is comprehensively settled.
5. For many decades, those institutions have continued to reaffirm the established national rights of the Palestinian people and to provide varied support for our people, in the political, economic and humanitarian realms.
6. Here, we must commend the exceptional ongoing work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other institutions in safeguarding the future for generations of Palestinian refugees and providing them with the basic services they need.
7. **Our appreciation goes also to those who have upheld the basic human rights of the Palestinian people and who have provided support in the areas of education and culture and in strengthening the role of the Palestinian Authority since its inception, as well as in building and strengthening our national institutions.**
8. **I would like also to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has given top priority to the Palestinian question, who has worked to reach a solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict and who has placed this matter at the centre of his concerns.**
9. **He has, in addition, creatively contributed to seeking the means to relaunch the Middle East peace process.**
10. The confrontations, wars and conflicts in our region and their tragic repercussions for the peoples of the region constitute the primary threat to global peace.
11. They call all of mankind to awareness.
12. They demand rapid intervention from the international community with the aim of settling this situation boldly and without delay.
13. Our experience over the years and decades shows that the policy of delaying a settlement of the principal conflicts in the region, the policy of providing partial solutions and the policy aimed at containing the conflict by limiting the damage only further complicate things, to the point where, today, there is a clear threat of civil war or regional war.
14. Moreover this climate has been conducive to terrorism, which unfortunately has spread to become a global phenomenon.
15. However, this grim picture should not mask the fact that hope is still alive.
16. Indeed, thanks to the determination of the vast majority of our people, and thanks to the support of the international community, our people are capable of overcoming the tragic situation that we are being pushed into by the forces of occupation, extremism and aggression and, by those who seek to provoke war and terrorism in our region.
17. There are on the other hand responsible, active forces in the Middle East, representing the consciousness of the people and possessing a true desire for freedom, progress and democracy for the people.
18. Although these forces are working in extreme difficulty, they are firmly committed to overcoming the current situation in order to create a new future for the Middle East in which our peoples would enjoy freedom and equality.
19. There can be no doubt that defending Islam — a religion of moderation, of love and brotherhood; a human religion — is the responsibility of those active forces in our region who seek to counter any attempt to undermine that true religion or to portray it in an unfair manner that is entirely out of keeping with its precepts.
20. Islam is a religion of tolerance that opposes killing, terrorism and assassination.
21. It is a religion of enlightenment, not ignorance or backwardness; a religion of openness to the world.
22. It is against extremism and close-mindedness.
23. We need to work hand in hand to preserve our shared human values.
24. Those values are today being violated, undermined and weakened.
25. We need to work to strengthen human understanding among religions and cultures because the attempt to foment conflict among religions, cultures and civilizations is one of the most dangerous methods used by international terrorism today.
26. That is why a dialogue among cultures, religions and civilizations is necessary today, particularly because we know that world wars have not been wars of religion or culture, but rather wars of interest.
27. That reality is only one fragment of the overall picture.
28. **In fact, missing recurrent opportunities to address the issues of our region seriously so as to reach bold, comprehensive solutions, in particular to the Palestinian question, moves our people to the precipice of despair and depression and makes them easy prey to the forces of ignorance and fanaticism.**
29. **Is it not high time to take this opportunity, the beginnings of which we see today, as the international community is moving towards relaunching the peace process, which enjoys the support not only of Israelis and Palestinians, but also of the international community and the world at large?**
30. **Is it not time to move seriously towards negotiating a complete end to the 1967 Israeli occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories, thereby achieving the vision of two States?**
31. **Is it not time to create a Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, to settle the refugee issue and to put an end to six decades of suffering?**
32. **Is it not time to reach a fair, agreed settlement under General Assembly resolution 194 of 1948?**
33. **Is it not time to end the policies of settlement expansionism, of taking land from Palestinians under various pretexts, of building the apartheid separation wall, laying siege and creating checkpoints around cities and towns and refugee camps?**
34. **Is it not time to end the policy of collective punishment and of denying freedom to the more than 11,300 Palestinians who are rotting in Israeli prisons, some for more than 25 years?**
35. **Is it not time to make Jerusalem a city of peace for all faiths and religions?**
36. **Is it not time for Israel, the occupying Power, to end any work that would change the sacred nature of that city and all attempts to displace its inhabitants and to violate sites sacred to Islam and Christianity?**
37. **Is it not time for Israel to end the daily assassinations, displacements, destruction of houses and seizure of land?**
38. **Is it not time for our people to be able to enjoy freedom and independence on equal footing with all other peoples of the world so that they can build a peaceful future together with all of their neighbours, including the State of Israel?**
39. **I hope that I will not have to come back to this rostrum next year to ask the same questions.**
40. **There is not the slightest obstacle to the successful holding of the upcoming peace conference, because our brotherly, Arab countries have demonstrated through the Arab Peace Initiative their true readiness to bring about a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, from which all States of the region would benefit.**
41. **Those States would have normal relations with Israel, once the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories had ended and an independent, sovereign Palestinian State had been created within the 1967 borders.**
42. **That is why we are committed to the substance of that proposed meeting, which should be held soon with the participation of all parties concerned.**
43. **Let me say quite frankly that not a single responsible political figure or leader who does not know that the solution to the problem lies solely between us and our Israeli neighbours.**
44. **Reaching such a lasting solution can only be a result of the many resolutions of the General Assembly, as well as of the initiative of President Bush, who has urged a two-State solution: a Palestinian State living side-by-side with the State of Israel.**
45. **It must also be based on the Road Map, endorsed in Security Council resolution 1515, the Arab Peace Initiative and the various negotiations, projects and plans that have been proposed by many parties since 2000.**
46. **I therefore address myself to the Israeli Government, with whose head I have recently met.**
47. **We discussed the important issues in depth, attempting to end the cycle of lost opportunities so that the international conference will become a substantial reality.**
48. **We can move towards that conference together, with clear, realistic, detailed plans with a view to settling all of the final status issues, including Jerusalem, borders, refugees, water security and other key issues.**
49. **I reaffirm here the full readiness of our people to join a genuine peace process that will lead to a comprehensive, full agreement on all final status issues.**
50. As we promised, we will put such an agreement to a popular referendum that will include all Palestinian factions and groups so that they can give their views and opinions on any decision that would lead to defending and safeguarding peace comprehensively and strategically.
51. I also reaffirm that we will continue to deal with the rebellion that took place in the Gaza Strip.
52. We shall do so in conformity with our basic laws and so that we can preserve democracy in our country.
53. Attempts from whatever group or faction to impose their will and dark ideas by force and armed revolt will not derail our democracy.
54. It would be wrong for anyone to think that our people, which has for decades sacrificed martyrs, prisoners and the wounded in order to obtain freedom, independence and democracy and to build a free and prosperous country, will follow such an armed group, a closed regime and a closed, backward society.
55. Some have attempted in the past to play the Palestinian issue as a political card in the service of regional interests in order to achieve expansionist goals or to promote specific ideas or ideologies that would ignore the true interests of the Palestinian people.
56. But we who have struggled all our lives for our national cause, for the protection of the rights and interests of our people and for rejection of hegemony and occupation will not allow such a tragedy to reoccur.
57. We will not allow those who tried to undermine our national destiny to achieve their aims.
58. I came to this rostrum to convey a message from an exhausted people which has long suffered from occupation, displacement, prison and martyrdom.
59. At the same time, however, they are a people who, imbued with dignity and faith, will build their own future, even though their past has been the work of those who have plotted against them and against their rights.
60. I have come to reiterate the words of our immortal leader Yasser Arafat, who was certain that the green branch of peace, which never withers or dies would never fall from his hand.
61. I have come to express the pain and suffering of every Palestinian man and woman, of all those who have lost loved ones or whose loved ones have been wounded, of all those who are waiting for the release from prison of their brothers, fathers, mothers and sisters, of all those who remain trapped on the Iraqi or Syrian borders and of the millions of Palestinians who are living as refugees on their own land.
62. I have come to affirm that the messages of peace of the prophets and the other divine messengers who trod the paths of our land remain vibrant, like a tree that continues to grow and bloom.
63. I have come to affirm that the voice of peace remains stronger than any other voice in our country.
64. **That is why I urge that we move forward, hand in hand, on the shining path towards peace, leaving expediency and short-term interests far behind.**
65. **In conclusion, and from this rostrum of the United Nations, I say to the Palestinian people, both those in Palestine and those abroad, that an important historic opportunity is emerging.**
66. **Therefore, let us be united in order to make that opportunity a reality so that our people, who have suffered so long, can recover their legitimate national rights and achieve the peace, stability and prosperity to which they aspire and which they deserve.**
67. We also hope that peace will come to other peoples who are suffering daily, such as the brotherly Iraqi people, and to those who deserve to live in security and stability within the framework of democracy, such as our dear friends the Lebanese people.
68. Together, let us build a stable world — a world of mutual assistance based on respect for life and for the right to self-determination.
69. I thank the Members of the United Nations for their support.

**Ms. Livni**:

1. Three thousand years ago, the people of Israel journeyed from slavery in Egypt to independence in the land of Israel.
2. The Bible tells us that on their voyage to liberty they made a crucial stop and received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai.
3. As the General Assembly gathers this year, the Jewish people recall that historic journey by marking the festival of Sukkot.
4. And every year, at this time, our people remember that the long march to freedom requires the acceptance of humanity’s basic values.
5. For 60 years, since the rebirth of our State in our ancient homeland, with Jerusalem at its heart, we have not lost sight of this principle.
6. The core values of tolerance, coexistence and peace that lie at the heart of every democracy must be protected within societies and promoted between them.
7. This is the calling of our generation.
8. **The conflict in our region is driven by those who reject these core values — those who seek power without responsibility, those whose aim is not to realize their own rights but to deny those rights for others.**
9. **At its heart, this is a conflict not about territory, but about values.**
10. **There is, of course, a territorial dimension to our dispute.**
11. **We know this and, as we have proven in the past, we are prepared for the territorial compromise that lasting peace entails.**
12. **But we also know, especially after withdrawing from Lebanon and Gaza, that territorial withdrawal by itself will not bring peace unless we address the core clash of values that lies beneath the conflict.**
13. **Israel may be on the front lines of this battle, but it is not our fight alone.**
14. This is a global battle.
15. The notion that this battle is a local one, limited to isolated regions, collapsed in this city with the twin towers on a September morning six years ago.
16. Today, it is clear that the extremists are engaged in a bloody war against civilians and communities, against hearts and minds, in every corner of the world.
17. And it is clear, too, that the Middle East conflict is not the cause of this global extremist agenda, but a consequence of it.
18. Yes, it is up to the parties in the Middle East to settle their political conflict, and Israel, for its part, desires to do so.
19. But for success to be genuine and lasting, you, the nations of the world, need to be partners in a shared global struggle against the extremism and terror that feed conflict, for your sake, not just for ours.
20. It is in this spirit that I would like to speak today about resolving our particular conflict, but also about the wider battle being waged today — the battle that affects us all.
21. This battle is global, not just because it targets civilians everywhere, but also because the extremists have taken aim at the fundamental pillars of every modern society — namely, democracy, tolerance and education.
22. These are the new battlefields of the twenty-first century, and it is in these arenas, more than any other, that the future of our world will be decided.
23. I believe in democracy.
24. I believe in its extraordinary power to produce free and peaceful societies founded on respect for human rights.
25. Democracy is a profound ideal, but it is also a vulnerable one.
26. Today, in different parts of the world, extremists, who are opposed to the very ideals of democracy, are entering the democratic process, not to abandon their violent agenda but to advance it.
27. As a spokesman for Al-Qaida recently declared,
28. “We will use your democracy to destroy your democracy”.
29. This should be a wake-up call for all of us.
30. It is time to reclaim democracy, and this begins by rejecting those who abuse it.
31. Genuine democracy is about values before it is about voting.
32. No true democracy on Earth allows armed militia or groups with racist or violent agendas to participate in elections.
33. But some demonstrate a troubling double standard.
34. There are some who insist on high standards in their own country but forget them when they look abroad.
35. Violent extremists who could never run for office at home are treated as legitimate politicians when elected elsewhere.
36. As a result, we empower those who use democratic means to advance anti-democratic ends.
37. And we strengthen the forces of those who not only undermine their societies but also threaten our own.
38. Today, from this podium, I call on the international community to adopt at the global level what democracies apply at the national one: a universal set of standards for participation in genuine democratic elections.
39. We need a universal democratic code that requires that all those seeking the legitimacy of the democratic process earn it by respecting such principles as State monopoly over the lawful use of force, the rejection of racism and violence and the protection of the rights of others.
40. The goal of such a universal code is not to dictate our values or to stifle legitimate voices with which we may disagree.
41. Its goal is to protect core democratic values from those determined to use the democratic system against itself; and to make clear that participation in the democratic process is not just a right — it is also a responsibility.
42. I know that the temptation to engage with extremists can be strong.
43. It may seem to promise stability and quiet.
44. We may hope that by feeding the beast we can gradually tame it.
45. As free societies, we pride ourselves, rightly, on our respect for difference and diversity.
46. But we do a disservice to diversity when, in its name, we tolerate the intolerant.
47. Bitter experience has shown that buying off extremists is a short-term fix for which we will pay dearly in the long run.
48. Instead, groups such as Hamas and Hizbullah must be presented with a clear choice between the path of violence and the path of legitimacy.
49. They cannot have both.
50. And it is this same stark choice that must be presented to the radical regime in Iran.
51. No responsible State disagrees that Iran is the most prominent sponsor of terrorism.
52. It is a major source of instability and conflict in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and across the entire Middle East;
53. and it is the enemy of Arab-Israeli coexistence.
54. No one disagrees that Iran denies the Holocaust and speaks openly of its desire to wipe a Member State — mine — off the map.
55. And no one disagrees that, in violation of Security Council resolutions, it is actively pursuing the means to achieve this end.
56. But there are still those who, in the name of consensus and engagement, continue to obstruct the urgent steps that are needed to bring Iran’s sinister ambitions to a halt.
57. Too many see the danger, but they walk idly by, hoping that someone else will take care of it.
58. What is the value, we have to ask, of an organization which is unable to take effective action in the face of a direct assault on the very principles it was founded to protect?
59. It is time for the United Nations, and the States of the world, to live up to their promise of never again, to say enough is enough, to act now and to defend their basic values.
60. It is also time to see this same kind of moral conviction in the Human Rights Council, so that it can become a shield for the victims of human rights, not a weapon for its abusers.
61. Israel has never tried to avoid genuine discussion of its human rights record.
62. But so long as the Council maintains its wildly disproportionate focus on Israel, it weakens the moral voice of the United Nations, and the price of this blindness is paid by the victims of human rights atrocities in Darfur and Myanmar and throughout the world.
63. There is no more accurate forecast for the future of a society than the lessons we teach our children.
64. Unfortunately, in our region, we see children’s television programmes in which Mickey Mouse puppets teach the glory of being a suicide bomber and a seven-year old girl sings of her dreams of blood and battle.
65. Religion, rather than being a source of hope and spiritual healing, is abused as a call to arms, as God is dragged once again onto the field of battle.
66. It is time to reclaim religion from those who have made it a weapon rather than a shelter.
67. It is time to reclaim education from those who use it as a tool of hate rather than an opportunity.
68. As always, the most powerful form of education, and the hardest, is to teach by example.
69. We cannot expect our younger generation to value what we are not prepared ourselves to protect and pay a price for.
70. And there is a price to pay.
71. From the leader who has to withstand public pressures.
72. From the businessman who has to forgo economic opportunity.
73. From the teacher and spiritual guide who must find the inner strength to teach truth and tolerance in a climate of extremism and hostility.
74. At all levels of society, there is a price to be paid.
75. But if we do not pay it today, we, and those who follow us, will face a far greater bill tomorrow.
76. **These thoughts are in my mind as we seek, today, to advance the cause of Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation.**
77. **Reconciliation is not about deciding who was right or who was wrong in the past;**
78. **it is about sharing a common vision and a common responsibility for the future.**
79. **In the last months, Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas have been engaged in a sincere and genuine effort to reach the widest possible common ground on political understandings.**
80. **There is no substitute for the bilateral process.**
81. **Failure is not an option, but it is for the parties themselves to define success.**
82. **The foundation for true peace lies in the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.**
83. **The world shares this vision, but it is also important that it clearly embrace the two core principles that emerge from it.**
84. **The first of these principles is: two States, two homelands.**
85. **Just as Israel is homeland to the Jewish people, so Palestine will be established as the homeland and the national answer for the Palestinian people, including the refugees.**
86. **The second is: living side by side in peace and security.**
87. **Just as a viable and prosperous Palestine in the West Bank and Gaza is an Israeli interest, so must a secure Israel be a Palestinian interest.**
88. **The world cannot afford another terror State.**
89. **Guided by these principles, the parties can define a common border and turn the two-State vision from a dream into reality.**
90. **To succeed, we must set our sights on a brighter future, while responding to the challenges of the present and learning the lessons of the past.**
91. **As we make progress on concrete political understandings, it is just as important to change the reality on the ground — to show Palestinians and Israelis that the promise of peace exists in practice, not just on paper.**
92. **In recent months, Israel has taken tangible measures to create a better environment, and we are ready to do more.**
93. **We know that Palestinian life is full of day-to-day hardship.**
94. **We know also, and only too well, the burden of terror that Israelis bear and of our primary obligation to their security.**
95. **Together, we can change this reality;**
96. **we do not need to submit to it.**
97. **We are not naive.**
98. **We can see the difficulties ahead and the enemies of peace that stand in our way.**
99. **But practical progress is possible in those areas where there is an effective Palestinian Government that accepts the Quartet’s principles and implements, alongside Israel, the existing Road Map obligations.**
100. **As the parties take the risks for peace, we look to the international community and the Arab and Muslim world to offer support, not to stipulate conditions.**
101. **This support comes in many forms.**
102. **It comes through economic and political assistance to the new Palestinian Government committed to coexistence and seeking to build the foundations of a peaceful and prosperous State.**
103. **It comes through the clear endorsement of any political understandings reached between the parties.**
104. **It comes through enhancing and deepening regional ties and cooperation between the Arab world and Israel, while in parallel we advance towards Israeli-Palestinian peace.**
105. **And, finally, it comes by confronting those determined to prevent us from succeeding.**
106. **We must stand up to those who have no respect for human life or human liberty, those who hold captive soldiers — Gilad Shalit, Udi Goldwasser and Eldad Regev — whose families are with us today and whose pain remains always in our hearts.**
107. **We must stand up to those who, after we withdrew from Gaza to give peace a chance, chose not to build but to destroy and who choose, on a daily basis, to target Israeli homes and kindergartens with their missiles.**
108. **And we must stand up to those who see democracy as a tool to advance hate, who see tolerance as a one-way street and who see education as a means of poisoning the minds of the next generation.**
109. **I believe that, despite all the obstacles, there is a new moment of opportunity and an alliance of interest that favours peace.**
110. **Time is of the essence.**
111. **We owe it to ourselves and to our children to find both the courage and the wisdom to make the right choices in the right way.**
112. On this festival of Sukkot, Jews commemorate the journey from slavery to freedom by leaving their homes to live in fragile huts, like the shelters in which our ancestors lived on their way to the Promised Land.
113. For 3,000 years, these temporary huts, open to the elements, have been a reminder that stability and security are ensured not only by the structures that we build but also by the values that we share.
114. Perhaps it is for this reason that the Sukkah, this fragile shelter, has become the Jewish symbol of peace.
115. We turn to Jerusalem and say in our prayers every day:
116. Spread over us the canopy of your peace.
117. May it be in our days, and for all nations.