**Mr. Abbas**:

1. At the outset, I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly for this session.
2. We wish you every success and express our confidence that you will continue to pursue the great mission undertaken by the United Nations, which constitutes a monumental achievement in the history of humankind towards the promotion of dialogue and understanding and the resolution of issues and conflicts.
3. That mission continues to be carried out in accordance with the rules and principles of international law, including humanitarian law, and on the basis of covenants that are consistent with the spirit of the times and the needs of the Organization in resolving problems and conflicts and confronting the enormous challenges before us, including poverty, hunger, the environment and climate change.
4. On this occasion, I also wish to commend the role and positive contributions of your predecessor, Mr. Srgjan Kerim, during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.
5. I would also like to express our deep appreciation for the efforts, positions and initiatives of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.
6. They reflect his foresight and pragmatism regarding the various issues before us and in all regions that are suffering crises and that pose threats to world peace, including in particular in the Middle East region.
7. **I highly value the Secretary-General’s understanding of the need to address the political and humanitarian issues concerning the Palestinian people and our region, along with the important role that continues to be played by various United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which continues to shoulder great burdens, especially in the Gaza Strip and in the refugee camps in the West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.**
8. **In the absence of such a continuous, outstanding role, we would have suffered even more severe and perilous crises than we have experienced to date.**
9. **This year, I should have liked to bear news of the achievement of a comprehensive agreement between us and our Israeli neighbours, bringing an end to the Israeli occupation of our land since 1967 and to the suffering of the millions of our people living as refugees and displaced persons in exile from their homeland.**
10. **I believe that the entire world, with its differing alliances and trends, shares that desire with me, especially following the Annapolis conference late last year and the relaunching of the political process.**
11. **That set the necessary guidelines for the advancement of negotiations towards the conclusion of a comprehensive and complete agreement on all final status issues.**
12. **Such an agreement would lead to the realization of peace within our region and allow it to enter a qualitatively new era of relations characterized by good-neighbourliness, mutual recognition, security and open borders, and not by walls and barriers.**
13. **I am certain that never in the history of the conflict in our region have so many countries gathered as those that attended the Annapolis conference or participated in the consensus that arose there.**
14. **Those who met not only demanded vigorous action to accelerate and advance negotiations towards the achievement of a final peace agreement,**
15. **but also explicitly emphasized the need to remove all of the obstacles that have continuously impeded the negotiating process and cast doubt on its credibility, usefulness and ability to actually resolve all aspects of the conflict.**
16. **The main obstacle I refer to is that of the Israeli settlement campaign and its continuation throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in East Jerusalem.**
17. **All of the participants in Annapolis took a united, firm and unprecedented stand calling for the immediate cessation of illegal settlement activities.**
18. **It was recognized that this was a prerequisite for allowing the negotiations to resolve the conflict to lead to an end to the occupation and the grave, historical injustices inflicted on our people over the long decades.**
19. **The participation of most brotherly Arab countries in the Annapolis conference was not merely a symbolic gesture.**
20. **On the contrary, their participation, in terms of both the level of attendance and the substance of positions, was a reflection of their genuine desire to embrace and support the political process and to address it in real earnest on the basis of the Arab peace initiative adopted at the Arab summit in Beirut in 2002.**
21. **Allow me, from this rostrum to recall once again the special importance of the Arab peace initiative.**
22. **I do this personally in order to draw attention to the significance of each of its platforms, because it represents a major joint Arab undertaking and offers a historic opportunity for us to achieve peace, security and mutual recognition for all.**
23. **Indeed, it is strange to hear comments, which we do not understand or accept, that are used to justify the continuing settlements in East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory and refer to the land as if it were not occupied territory or as if peace were possible without an end to the occupation of all of the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including the occupied Syrian Golan and the Lebanese Sheba’a Farms, and without an end to the occupation of East Jerusalem, the capital of our future Palestinian State and a city holy to hundreds of millions of the faithful of the monotheistic religions.**
24. **For the purpose of the noble and peaceful objectives of building of a new Middle East free of destructive mindsets and irrational tendencies that run counter to the highest human values preached by all religions and creeds — a new Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction — we have been and remain committed to international legitimacy.**
25. **We extend our hands for dialogue and negotiation to resolve the conflict in a way that provides all that is required for coexistence and openness to the future so we can build our societies and nations in accordance with the aspirations of our peoples to progress and in the spirit of the times.**
26. In that context, we express our full support for the continuation of the indirect talks currently taking place between Syria and Israel with the help of sisterly Turkey.
27. We hope that the process will culminate in the achievement of justice, the implementation of international resolutions and the affirmation of international legitimacy.
28. **For our part, we will continue to strive to achieve the maximum possible progress in the current negotiations between us and Israel through this year, benefiting from past experience and relying on the desire of all our peoples to realize a genuine and comprehensive peace that will end decades of occupation and hostilities and result in the attainment of the two-State solution — the State of Palestine living alongside the State of Israel on the basis of the 1967 borders — and a just and agreed solution to the plight of the Palestinian refugees in accordance with resolution 194.**
29. **In referring to the benefits of past experience, I wish to convey clearly that partial or interim solutions or the dropping or deferral of those core issues are unacceptable and unviable and will maintain the roots of the conflict, thus undermining any achievement on the road to peace.**
30. **The solution must be comprehensive, complete, detailed and wholehearted.**
31. **The solution we aspire to must include a mechanism to ensure its full and faithful implementation pursuant to the timetable agreed upon.**
32. **All that inevitably requires international supervision of the implementation of the solution, as well as a more effective role for the international Quartet in safeguarding the solution we will reach and an effective guarantor role for the Security Council and various other United Nations bodies.**
33. **At this juncture, I would like to express our appreciation for the role played by the United States Administration, President George Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in advancing the negotiations and the peace process, as well as their efforts to remove the obstacles that stand in its way.**
34. **I also wish to commend the positions taken by the Arab, Islamic and non-aligned countries, which have always taken firm stances in support of a just peace.**
35. **I would like to express our appreciation for the role played by the European Union, which has supported our efforts in every possible way, and the role and positions of the Russian Federation, the People’s Republic of China and Japan, as well as of our friends and colleagues in Latin America and Africa who have always supported the advancement and continuity of the political process.**
36. **As humankind celebrates the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the conditions being endured by our people are increasingly severe and complex.**
37. **Our nation, which possesses only a small area of land, continues to suffer the fragmentation and discontinuity of its cities and villages as a result of more than 600 checkpoints and roadblocks on all main and secondary roads.**
38. **There is no precedent for that in modern history.**
39. **The harshest and most painful of those barriers are those that have surrounded occupied East Jerusalem, severing the link between it and its Palestinian surroundings, not to mention changing the Islamic and Christian character of our city.**
40. **Attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinian civilians have become daily occurrences.**
41. **At the same time, ongoing tragedies strike every Palestinian family with the continuing detention and imprisonment of over 11,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails.**
42. **I know of no situation in today’s world comparable to ours, where a people is subject to the detention of such large numbers of its civilians and where prisons continue to be filled with more and more accused who are guilty only of wanting to be free and of envisioning a future that is different from the reality of occupation, siege and the loss of hope.**
43. Despite those harsh circumstances, our National Authority and governing institutions have exerted every possible effort to improve our conditions in all fields, including the security, economic, education, health and cultural sectors.
44. I wish to express our gratitude to our brothers in the Arab countries, to the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, and to the whole international community for all the important assistance extended to our people and our Authority in all aspects of the endeavour to restore the Palestinian economy, provide real opportunities for its advancement, and rebuild the Palestinian security apparatus and the various institutions and agencies of the Palestinian Authority.
45. In that regard, I wish to convey special thanks and appreciation to all the envoys from other countries who have provided assistance in several fields, particularly Mr. Tony Blair, the Quartet Special Envoy.
46. It is with pride that I can say that, even under those most difficult conditions we have been able to achieve security, the rule of law and public order for most of our towns and districts, despite all the remaining obstacles we have to confront.
47. However, we will continue to follow that same path with firm determination and resolve.
48. In that connection, the Paris Donor’s Conference, followed by the Bethlehem economic conference, were two special occasions in support of our national economy, our financial and economic institutions and treasury, and assistance to the Palestinian private sector, which has unwaveringly borne heavy burdens over the past years and has not failed to develop and progress.
49. **There is no doubt that the ongoing siege of the Gaza Strip, where unemployment is endemic, is compounding the tragic humanitarian crisis there.**
50. **It is unprecedented in scope and scale, and the opportunities for education and medical care are scarce, punishing and causing the malnutrition of an entire generation with all the consequent risks for the future of the entire people.**
51. **All of that is in addition to the transformation of the Gaza Strip into a huge virtual prison holding nearly 1.5 million Palestinians.**
52. **We have exerted all efforts to get the siege on Gaza lifted, this dear part of our homeland.**
53. In that regard, we express our deep appreciation for the role played by the brotherly Arab countries, especially Egypt, to alleviate the suffering and to help us save our people from the extremely difficult situation they find themselves in, including in particular their efforts to end the division resulting from the bloody coup led by Hamas against Palestinian legitimacy more than a year ago.
54. As I have on more than one occasion, I would like to reaffirm once again from this rostrum that we will spare no effort to achieve Palestinian national reconciliation.
55. We have already announced a preliminary plan that opens the door for this reconciliation to be realized and the formation of an independent, impartial Government that is acceptable to all, but that will not place us back under siege again.
56. This Government will prepare for the holding of legislative and presidential elections.
57. We will continue building a security apparatus based on professional tenets, with the support of Arab security.
58. After the completion of those steps, it will be possible for us to proceed further towards strengthening our reconciliation and deepening the participation of all.
59. If that is not actualized, whoever rejects those principles and does not conform with them must bear the responsibility before our entire people and before the Arab and international positions that reject this disintegration and division.
60. In concluding my statement, I recall the words of our great Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish, whom we recently lost and whose loss was that of a great cultural and humanitarian symbol and icon.
61. Mahmoud Darwish glorified life and cherished his homeland, calling on our new generations to love life on their land and to preserve its continuity and to keep the torch always lit.
62. Mahmoud Darwish said,
63. “On this land there is something that deserves life, on this land there was first the beginning and the end — a land called Palestine — a name that was and is and will endure”.

**President Peres**:

1. **Over 60 years have passed since the General Assembly voted on the historic resolution that would have put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict.**
2. **Resolution 181 called for the establishment of a Jewish State and an Arab State.**
3. **Its title was “Plan of Partition with Economic Union”.**
4. **It envisioned two States for two peoples, fulfilling a distinct national aspiration.**
5. **The Jewish people adopted the resolution and established the State of Israel.**
6. **The Arabs rejected it, and this led to war.**
7. **What happened in the ensuing years is much different from the resolution’s original intent.**
8. **While much has changed since then, the ironies of history summon similar circumstances today.**
9. **Today, again, we are in the middle of the lake.**
10. **There is no sense going back.**
11. **Continuing forward will show how near we are to achieving the initial goal.**
12. A year prior to Israel’s declaration of statehood, its first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, called me, a young man from a kibbutz, to serve in our national defence.
13. Since then, I have participated in Israel’s dynamic realities: the building of security; the striving for peace.
14. So, I need no books to learn the history, since I witnessed its miraculous unfolding.
15. We went through seven wars.
16. All have paid heavily.
17. Tears still flow down the faces of bereaved mothers.
18. Remembrance days fill the air with silent prayers of widowed families who lost young boys and girls in battle.
19. They are, today, the same age, but lifeless.
20. Israel turned military victories into peace processes, knowing that the cost of life renders imperfect peace superior to perfect victories.
21. We have also achieved two peace agreements: the first, with the largest Arab country, Egypt; the second, with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.
22. All the land, all the water, all the natural resources that fell into our hands through war were completely repatriated after peace was signed.
23. But for peace, the call in our region is to repair the damaged environment and the wounded land which leads to poverty.
24. If we do not overcome the desert, the thirst, the pollution, they will overcome us.
25. Joint ventures can meet this call.
26. Nature does not carry a national passport.
27. **With the Palestinians, we negotiate full peace.**
28. **Both parties agreed to building a Palestinian State side by side with Israel, living in peace, security and respect.**
29. **We tried to conclude those negotiations this year.**
30. **Apparently, this will take a longer time.**
31. **I believe it can be accomplished, in spite of this, within the next year.**
32. **I know that our Prime Minister is more than ready to conclude an agreement.**
33. **And knowing President Abbas as well, I am sure he will not miss this opportunity.**
34. **We agreed to progress in spite of possible changes that may take place in the leadership.**
35. **Gaps have been narrowed through negotiations, particularly, and hopefully, the territorial ones.**
36. **But peace is not just a matter of territorial compromise.**
37. **Rogue politics rejects peace even when and where territorial disputes have been resolved.**
38. In Lebanon, we implemented the resolutions of the United Nations, but Hizbullah paralysed the country and cut the road to peace.
39. **From Gaza, we withdrew completely and dismantled all of our settlements.**
40. **I know there are a great many complaints about the settlements:**
41. **in Gaza, we dismantled 30 settlements by order of the Government;**
42. **Hamas responded with a bloody takeover and turned the Strip into a base for rocket fire.**
43. **These militants offer no positive alternative but the agonies of Job.**
44. **They added kidnapping to bombings, bringing strife to innocent families.**
45. **From this rostrum, I call for the immediate release of Gilad Shalit, the son of Aviva and Noam, a most peace-loving family**.
46. **This Assembly should place the release of that person at the top of its priorities.**
47. **Holding a hostage in Gaza, causes Gaza’s isolation and could cause further deterioration.**
48. At the centre of this violence and fanaticism stands Iran.
49. It presents a danger to the entire world.
50. Its quest for religious hegemony and regional dominance divides the Middle East and holds back chances for peace, including among Arabs, while undermining human rights.
51. Iranian support for Hizbullah divides Lebanon.
52. Its support for Hamas splits the Palestinians;
53. it postpones the establishment of the Palestinian State.
54. Yesterday, from this very rostrum, the Iranian leader renewed the darkest anti-Semitic libel — the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” — bringing to life one of the ugliest plots against the Jewish people.
55. Their despicable denial of the Holocaust is a mockery of indisputable evidence and a cynical offence against the survivors of the Holocaust, contrary to the resolutions adopted by this very Assembly.
56. Iran continues to develop enriched uranium and long-range missiles.
57. It has introduced a religion of fear, opposing the call of the Lord to respect human life: all humans; all life.
58. The Iranian people are not our enemies.
59. Their fanatical leadership is their problem and the world’s woe.
60. Their leader is a danger to his own people, to the region and to the world.
61. He is a disgrace to the ancient Iranian people and tradition.
62. He is a disgrace to the values of Islam and all religions.
63. He is a disgrace to this House, the United Nations, and its basic principles and values.
64. His appearance here is a shame.
65. The Jewish people have known throughout history that they must stand firm and face evil.
66. Enlightened humanity should make it possible for freedom and respect to prevail for all of us.
67. Tehran combines long-range missiles with short-range minds.
68. It is pregnant with tragedies.
69. The General Assembly and the Security Council bear the responsibility to prevent agonies before they take place.
70. Israel has shown that democracies can defend themselves.
71. We are able to defend ourselves.
72. We do not intend to change that capacity to defend ourselves.
73. Terrorism has not solved a single problem.
74. It never has;
75. it never will.
76. It will make the world ungovernable.
77. If groups of killers are allowed to threaten innocent masses, the world — if it continues to survive — will be without order and security, a hopeless battleground.
78. The free world must unite to stop this, to combat it.
79. Israel, for its part, shall continue to seek peace sincerely and fully.
80. We suggest immediate peace with Lebanon.
81. Israeli Prime Ministers have indicated to Syria that, for peace, we are ready to explore a comprehensive compromise.
82. To gain trust and save time, we have suggested a face-to-face meeting with President Assad.
83. I say to the President:
84. “Follow the successful example set by President Sadat and King Hussein”.
85. We await an answer.
86. I know there is a growing concern that peace is far away.
87. My lifelong experience provides me with a different judgement.
88. True, I have seen stagnation, regression and failure in our journey, but today I can identify a road leading in the right direction.
89. In addition to the peace agreements, a series of summits have taken place: Madrid, Oslo, Wye, Camp David, Sharm el-Sheik, Annapolis.
90. **In fact, Israelis and Arabs are marching towards peace.**
91. **After a long internal debate, Israel has chosen to support the two-State solution.**
92. **Furthermore, I must say that in Beirut, the Arab League replaced the three “nays” of Khartoum — which were no peace, no negotiation, no recognition — with an initiative inaugurated by King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.**
93. **I call upon the King to further his initiative.**
94. **It may become an invitation for comprehensive peace — one to transform a battleground into a common ground.**
95. **I respectfully invite all leaders to come to discuss peace in Jerusalem — which is holy to all of us — where all of us are praying to the same Lord as offspring of the same Father.**
96. **Israel shall gladly accept an Arab invitation to designate a venue where a meaningful dialogue may take place at their choice.**
97. We are facing a serious economic crisis in the world.
98. Perhaps it has happened because we are rich and light with funds and poor and heavy with ideas, while we live in an era in which science, not land, is the basis for a successful economy.
99. Science does not stop at borders; it is not disturbed by distances.
100. Wisdom cannot be conquered by armies.
101. Knowledge diminishes discrimination because it operates through goodwill and transcends race, nationality, colour and gender.
102. The global dangers unite and divide us at the same time.
103. The dangers are clear: degradation of the environment, shortage of water, lack of renewable energy, the spread of terrorism and, alas, increased poverty among millions and millions of people.
104. The divisions of the free world may increase them.
105. Unity may offer alternatives.
106. It would direct global investments to new areas and to demanding challenges such as health, security, education and the environment.
107. The future is not in the hands of oil or gold.
108. Intellectual assets, new inventions and superior education hold the key to the future of each of us.
109. In our region, border areas could become open economic zones, permitting the free movement of people, commodities and ideas.
110. They could encourage tourism and build high-tech incubators.
111. They could cultivate and advance modern agriculture.
112. **Economic zones would provide a million jobs and produce billions of cubic metres of desalinated water for the Arabs, for the Palestinians, for the Jordanians, for Israel — for all of us.**
113. We have already started to do this;
114. the initial steps are promising.
115. The Jewish people are celebrating a New Year.
116. I would like to end with a quote by Rabbi Nachman of Breslav:
117. “May it be thy will to remove war and bloodshed from the world and perpetuate the wonders and greatness of peace.
118. All the inhabitants of the world shall recognize and know the truth: that we have not been placed on this earth to wage war and not for hatred or bloodshed.”