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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 101: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (A/56/90-E/2001/17)

1. **Ms. Tallawy** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)) introduced the note by the Secretary-General attaching 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/56/90-E/2001/17), and said that the situation had further deteriorated since the period covered by the report. In its resolution 1322 (2000), the Security Council had also expressed its deep concern over the tragic events that had taken place since 28 September 2000 that had led to numerous deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinians.

2. In considering the report, the Committee would undoubtedly wish to bear in mind the basic principles of international law and jurisprudence relating to self-determination and the occupation of territory by force, in particular the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

3. Delays in the implementation of peace agreements or the partial implementation of such agreements, together with the expansion of settlements, the closure of "safe passage" routes, the excessive use of military weapons and the demolition of houses, continued to contribute to the deterioration of the living conditions of the Palestinian people. According to the report, 59 per cent of the West Bank, 20 per cent of the Gaza Strip and 30 per cent of East Jerusalem were still under exclusive Israeli control. Moreover, the Israeli Government had set no restrictions on settlement expansion. On the contrary, the number of settlements was constantly increasing and Israel applied discriminatory measures that severely restricted the growth of Palestinian communities and the movement of the Palestinian people.

4. The pollution from Israeli settlements was a growing problem. Various waste products, including industrial waste, were dumped on Palestinian land, contaminating water resources and producing a

disastrous effect on public health. Israel's control of the water supply also created a severe water shortage and several ongoing waste-treatment projects financed by the European Union had been put on hold indefinitely. In addition, the Israeli army and Jewish settlers had uprooted over half a million fruit trees, mainly olive trees, while more than 80 per cent of the deforestation of land was attributable to Israeli occupation, in particular settlement building and the establishment of military bases.

5. As the report showed, Israeli occupation had inhibited investment and growth, while restrictions on the movement of people had led to the loss of jobs and trade revenues. Moreover, owing to border closures, the average monthly unemployment rate among Palestinians amounted to more than 38 per cent, with lost wages estimated at \$60 million. The number of people living below the poverty line had increased by 50 per cent and infrastructure, private property and agricultural land had suffered damage amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars. In the occupied Syrian Golan, employment opportunities for the Arab population continued to be extremely restricted. Furthermore, in addition to the substantial wage differences which prevailed, Arab employees had no access to social benefits, health insurance or unemployment compensation.

6. In conclusion, she said that Israeli activities in the occupied areas were inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations and with Security Council resolutions. The findings of the report underlined the need to discontinue the collective punishment of an entire people through border closures, the withholding of resources, the destruction of property and the illegal establishment of settlements. Moreover, such policies, which disregarded international norms and undermined the objectives set forth in international conventions, posed a serious threat to peace and security in the entire region.

7. **Mr. Al-Haddad** (Yemen) stressed that the situation in the Palestinian territory remained extremely tense. Israeli acts of aggression, in particular the continued destruction of property and clampdown on demonstrations led to deaths, including those of women and children. Such practices constituted a major obstacle to peace in the region.

8. The Economic and Social Council had also reaffirmed that Israeli settlements in the Occupied

Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan, were illegal and an obstacle to economic and social development. Furthermore, in its resolution 55/209, the General Assembly had reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources and called upon Israel not to endanger those resources.

9. The underlying causes of the deterioration in the living conditions of the Palestinians included the increase in restrictions on the mobility of the Palestinians. As a result of the closure of the "safe passage" route between the West Bank and Gaza in October 2001, for instance, students from the Gaza Strip had been unable to attend classes in the West Bank. The closure of the Gaza International Airport and border crossings had also hindered Palestinian foreign trade.

10. In addition to the expansion of settlements in the occupied territories, the shortage of water was a critical issue which further exacerbated the suffering of the Palestinians. Over 150 villages were not connected to any water supply. In June 2000, the Israeli authorities had sabotaged 20 ancient water cisterns situated on Islamic Waqf land. Waste and sewage from Israeli settlements continued to be dumped on agricultural land, sometimes contaminating springs with disastrous consequences for the health of the Palestinian population. In the occupied Syrian Golan, thousands of hectares of land had been seized and settlement expansion was ongoing. The members of the Arab population of the Golan were only able to obtain unskilled or semi-skilled jobs and they had only limited access to education.

11. He emphasized the need for compliance with all the Security Council resolutions relating to the Middle East peace process and with the General Assembly resolution which reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan over all their natural and economic resources.

12. **Mr. Al-Dhanhani** (United Arab Emirates) said that, despite the appeals of the international community and the General Assembly resolutions calling on the Israeli Government to end the occupation of the Palestinian and Arab territories, that Government was continuing its policy of violence and settlement expansion by using, inter alia, arms prohibited by

international conventions. The acts of violence committed against Palestinians during the past 13 months amply demonstrated the true intention of the Israeli Government to drive Palestinians from their territory in order to replace them with Jewish settlers. What other explanation could there be for the shellings, the murder of women and children, the assassination of Palestinian leaders, the closure of towns and the destruction of infrastructure and holy sites? Such acts were nothing more than part of a genuine colonialist scheme.

13. In addition, Israel looted the natural and water resources of the Palestinians and contaminated water cisterns. Owing to the restrictions on the water supply from those cisterns, farmers were unable to provide sufficient irrigation for their land and agricultural production was limited. The Israeli army and Jewish settlers had uprooted thousands of fruit trees, mainly olive trees, in order to establish settlements and military bases. The pollution caused by the dumping of industrial and military waste in the occupied territories had a disastrous impact, both on the health of the Palestinian population and on the environment.

14. He strongly condemned such violations of international humanitarian law, in particular of the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and affirmed that Israel was responsible for the ensuing humanitarian and economic consequences. He called on the United Nations and the Security Council to adopt immediate measures to put an end to such aggression against the Palestinian people and guarantee the protection of their property and natural resources, as well as their right to free movement and self-determination, in accordance with the principle of land for peace.

15. **Mr. Al-Hadid** (Jordan) said that, in its resolution 55/209, the General Assembly had reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources and called upon Israel, the occupying Power, not to exploit or endanger those resources. It also recognized the right of the Palestinian people to claim restitution as a result of any loss or depletion of those natural resources, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 2000/31 of the Economic and Social Council, which also stated that Israeli settlements in that territory were illegal and an obstacle to economic and social development.

16. Throughout the years of occupation, Israel had established approximately 170 settlements in the West Bank. In addition, approximately 180,000 Israelis resided in East Jerusalem and 7,500 settlers lived in the Gaza Strip, all of which had an adverse effect on the living conditions of the population. The geographical distribution of those settlements restricted the free movement of goods and people and posed an obstacle to the development of the occupied territories. The sewage and industrial waste which they produced also continued to contaminate the region's water resources, degrading the condition of the water in the River Jordan, with dire consequences for the water life. In that regard, it should be noted that, in Israel, the cost of waste disposal was three to six times higher than in the Palestinian territory. Israel also consumed 80 per cent of the water resources in the West Bank.

17. In addition, 80 per cent of the deforestation of land in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was attributable to the Israeli occupation, which also inhibited economic growth and investment, a situation which was further aggravated by Israeli-imposed restrictions on the movement of goods and people that prevented trading activities between Palestinians and neighbouring Arab countries.

18. Employment opportunities for the Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan continued to be restricted in view of the lack of freedom of movement. The employment available was unskilled or semi-skilled and, in addition, the Israeli taxation policy furthered the deterioration of the financial situation of the Arab population.

19. He hoped that all illegal occupation of the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and all damage to Muslim and Christian holy sites would cease. In his view, the Israeli practice of settlement expansion hampered the peace process and constituted a flagrant violation of the rules of international law and of the Security Council resolutions. The establishment of peace was fully linked to Israel's withdrawal from its settlements and to respect for the principle of land for peace.

20. **Mr. Zeidan** (Lebanon) regretted that the Committee should once again be obliged to appeal for an end to the daily atrocities inflicted by Israel on the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and on the population in the occupied Syrian Golan.

21. There was much talk about the creation of the long-awaited Palestinian State, a goal towards which the Palestinians had long been working, but the operation and survival of a Palestinian State depended on various factors. By freezing economic development in the occupied territory, however, the Israeli occupation prevented the necessary conditions from being met and placed the Palestinian economy "under siege" while the world stood watching. The situation, which was equally deplorable in the occupied Syrian Golan, was further inhibited by Israeli-imposed measures that restricted the expansion of education.

22. The report (A/56/90-E/2001/17) indicated that the Israeli authorities had increased their harassment of Palestinians, in particular by denying their right to free movement and communication. Since 28 September 2000, the situation had deteriorated: their land had been confiscated, their houses demolished, their rights flouted and their economic development blocked. Through its policy of closure, Israel was attempting to destroy the entire basis of the life of the Palestinians, as in southern Lebanon, where the economic and social consequences continued to exact a high price.

23. The intifadah was a cry from the Palestinian people for justice and the right to self-determination. During the current session, Israel, a State Member of the United Nations, would probably attempt to undermine the work of the Committee by insisting that the report (A/56/90-E/2001/17) was one-sided, notwithstanding that the situation which it described was alarming. He wondered whether the international community would once again allow the same occupying Power to perpetrate the same horrendous acts.

24. On countless occasions, his delegation had called for the immediate implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and it would continue to do so until it was heard. He stressed that Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories was the only way to achieve lasting peace and security, both in the area and worldwide.

25. **Ms. Rasheed** (Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine) deplored the fact that, for over 30 years, Israel had exploited the natural resources of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and other Arab territories by denying the Palestinian people the right of control over those resources and by pursuing its ongoing construction of illegal settlements. In 2000,

the Israeli authorities had again uprooted fruit trees, razed agricultural land, confiscated land and demolished homes as part of their destructive policies, which had a negative impact on the general situation and on natural resources and development in particular.

26. The Israeli authorities had not altered their policies in regard to water since 1967 and the resulting shortage of water in the occupied territories had led to a decline in agricultural output. Israel continued to steal the natural heritage of the Palestinian people (by sabotaging water cisterns, dumping solid and chemical waste and polluting water resources). Those practices, which were insensitive to the environment, threatened the quality of life of the Palestinian people in those territories.

27. Despite any recent positive developments in that regard, Israel persisted in pursuing the same policy of exploiting natural resources, which it justified under various pretexts, thereby hampering economic development in the territories and undermining the efforts of the international donor community. The international community should therefore treat the matter with greater concern and call for an end to such practices, which undermined what remained of the peace process.

28. The report (A/56/90-E/2001/17) confirmed that the situation had deteriorated, particularly since the military campaign launched on 28 September 2000. It indicated that the expansion of settlements and the closures imposed by Israel had been among the primary causes of the current crisis. It also condemned Israel's violations of international law and international humanitarian law, in particular the fourth Geneva Convention, which was applicable to all territories occupied by Israel since 1967. The international community had always affirmed the illegality of such practices, and it was important to recall that it had also affirmed the right of the Palestinian people to restitution as a result of any exploitation, loss or depletion of, or danger to, their natural resources (General Assembly resolution 55/209).

29. The General Assembly should both reaffirm and seek to ensure the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and of the population in the other occupied territories. It should also exert pressure on Israel to cease all practices which exacerbated the situation and

undermined the potential for the socio-economic development of the Palestinian people.

30. **Mr. Megiddo** (Israel) said that the issues dealt with by the Committee affected the well-being of the human race and that there was a consensus concerning the basic goals of international cooperation in regard to matters such as poverty and food security. Unfortunately, however, some sought to divert the discussion from those issues and detract from the ability to reach a consensus.

31. His delegation could have chosen to respond in detail to every aspect of the report (A/56/90-E/2001/17) but would refrain from doing so in order to save the Committee's valuable time. He nonetheless wished to point out that the report was one-sided; it ignored the fact, for instance, that in accordance with the agreements already reached, the Palestinian Authority exercised jurisdiction over its natural resources. The report also referred to issues which the parties had agreed to settle through direct bilateral negotiations. Throughout the past decade, five consecutive Israeli Governments had sought to achieve peace. At the Camp David meeting held in July 2000 between Mr. Barak and Mr. Arafat, his Government had demonstrated its willingness to make concessions in order to achieve peace. The summit meeting, however, had failed, even though Israel had offered virtually all of the land to the Palestinians.

32. The failure of the negotiations did not justify acts of terrorism, which were an obstacle to the conclusion of an agreement. Such violence, which cost lives on both sides, was intended to coerce Israel into making further concessions and to allow the Palestinians to make political gains. It should therefore be clearly stressed that terror would not succeed and that, as long as it persisted, Israel would be obliged to defend itself.

33. In the future, as a basis for negotiations, the plan of the Mitchell Commission recommended that the parties should commence with a cessation of violence with a view to establishing confidence-building measures and then move on to political negotiations. Israel was willing to agree to a total ceasefire and would take action to end the hostilities in the same determined manner in which it had sought to achieve peace in the region. Since the future of the region was dependent on cooperation among its peoples and in all aspects of life, he hoped that the Palestinians and all

Israel's neighbours would join in the efforts to achieve peace, development and prosperity.

34. **Mr. Stanislavov** (Russian Federation) said that, in its resolution 55/209, the General Assembly had reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources, including land and water. It had also called upon Israel, the occupying Power, not to exploit, to cause loss or depletion of or to endanger the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan; recognized the right of the Palestinian people to claim restitution as a result of any exploitation, loss or depletion of, or danger to, their natural resources; and expressed the hope that the issue would be dealt with in the framework of the final status negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. The living conditions of the Palestinian people however, continued to deteriorate. It had emerged from the report (A/56/90-E/2001/17) that the deteriorating situation and the Israeli-imposed closure of borders and crossing points, together with the expansion of settlements, had delayed the implementation of the agreements concluded between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. A growing proportion of the Palestinian population lived below the poverty line as a result of the occupation and the crisis that had resulted. Clearly, such problems could not be resolved until a comprehensive solution could be found to the Middle East conflict.

35. The confrontations between Israelis and Palestinians, which had continued for more than a year, were extremely worrying. The tense and dangerous situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was marked by the growing number of terrorist acts which provoked reprisals. Despite numerous efforts, the peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians had been set back. The Palestinian Authority should take the necessary measures to put an end to terrorist activities, as the situation would never return to normal as long as terrorist attacks were being carried out. For their part, the Israeli authorities should refrain from sending their troops into the Palestinian territory and should also cease their campaign of firing on the people.

36. Since the start of the conflict, his country had taken measures aimed at putting an end to the violence and ensuring the resumption of the peace process, a goal that was central to the foreign policy of the Russian Government, which was stepping up contacts

with the United Nations, United States and Israeli leaders and the representatives of the Palestinian people. The Minister for Foreign Affairs had been particularly active in his discussions with the various mediators and with the Israelis and the Palestinians. Urgent steps should be taken towards a political settlement of the conflict on the basis of dialogue and cooperation. Measures should also be adopted to guarantee the implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell Commission, which both parties had accepted and which constituted a key stage in the resumption of negotiations. His country was determined to do its utmost to ensure the resumption of the peace process, in accordance with the principles set forth in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

37. **Mr. Fahmy** (Egypt) said that the current agenda item had been under consideration by the Committee for several years and that he wavered between moments of optimism over the peace process and periods of difficulty and frustration, such as the present time. There had been no significant improvement in the capacity of the people living under Israeli occupation to exploit their natural resources. The occupation authorities had continued their harmful practices of expanding settlements and exploiting natural resources without taking into account the rights of the Palestinians and the Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan, despite the many United Nations resolutions which deemed that the Israeli settlements were illegal and an obstacle to economic and social development. The occupation forces were responsible for polluting the environment and water resources and, in addition, they prevented activities such as livestock raising, agriculture and trade, as well as some types of employment, and limited the educational opportunities of the people living under occupation.

38. Israel considered itself to be above the law and the jurisdiction of the United Nations and its practices were incompatible with the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War. Although the third millennium ushered in the concept of good governance on the basis of respect for rights, a colonial Power which was a throwback to a regrettable colonial era of oppressive, racist and discriminatory practices nevertheless remained.

39. He called on all countries to promote human rights and not to remain passive in the face of a situation which affected the economic and social rights

of the peoples under occupation. States should not adopt a one-sided policy on the pretext that the situation had political implications. He hoped that new prospects for peace would emerge during the coming year, together with the liberation and independence of the Palestinian people.

40. **Mr. Sabbagh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the latest report submitted by the Secretary-General (A/56/90-E/2001/17) gave fresh examples of the suffering of the Palestinians and the Arab populations who were the victims of Israel's occupation. In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the international community had affirmed the need to establish a just and lasting peace and to guarantee human dignity in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It had also affirmed that it would continue, through the resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council, to reaffirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the populations of the occupied Arab territories, in particular their right over their natural resources. Israel nevertheless continued to flout international law and the resolutions that had been adopted by continuing to establish settlements and confiscate land from Arab families which were evicted. The current Israeli Prime Minister had even declared that the Israeli settlement of the Golan was one of the greatest successes of Zionism, in defiance of the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 446 (1979), 465 (1980) and 487 (1981).

41. Not satisfied with stepping up its settlement activities, Israel continued to impose its policy by means of force, acts of terrorism, assassinations and massacres, while giving free rein to its blind military machine, which made no distinction between women, children and old people, who were directly targeted by aircraft, tanks and cannons. Israel violated all international norms and values and through its policies was attempting to alter the demographic situation and was unfairly exploiting the natural resources. Its policy of murder and massacre, moreover, impeded any peace in the Middle East. The current crisis and tensions were the result of Israel's policy, which rejected the Madrid peace principles. In view of the present circumstances, the international community should take decisive action to implement the United Nations resolutions in accordance with international law and humanitarian law.

42. **Mr. Al-Dosari** (Qatar) said that the report (A/56/90-E/2001/17) showed the adverse effects of the

Israeli occupation on the daily life of the people concerned and on the environment and natural resources. The occupation authorities continued their attacks on mosques and cultural sites, in addition to which they confiscated natural resources, in particular agricultural land and water, without regard for the right of the Palestinians, whom they drove from their homes and replaced with thousands of Jews from all parts of the world. The report showed that more settlements were being established and that that prevented the Palestinian Authority from exercising its full sovereignty and impeded the growth of industry, particularly in the fishing and tourism sectors, in an already weakened economy. The occupation forces imposed severe restrictions, prevented the Palestinians from having access to water resources and destroyed wells and water cisterns. Furthermore, they were responsible for excessive pollution and the degradation of the environment; that was detrimental to public health and a flagrant violation of the fundamental rights recognized in international law. There were numerous other examples, particularly in the occupied Syrian Golan. Generally speaking, the settlements reduced the population and destabilized the social and economic situation.

43. In his address to the General Assembly on 10 November 2001, Sheikh bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, had said that the time for an end to the tragedy suffered by the Palestinian people as a result of the Israeli occupation was well overdue and that the international community should assume its responsibilities and provide the necessary protection for a people that was a victim of unwarranted and unacceptable aggression. He also drew attention to the final communiqué of the ninth extraordinary session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Doha on 10 October 2001, which had welcomed the United States statements concerning the right of the Palestinians to establish their own State. Those statements, which had been supported by the Russian Federation, the European Union, China, Japan, several African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, represented a positive development which was consistent with international law and took into account the strategic objective of a lasting peace.

44. The occupation forces were responsible for the current situation and committed flagrant violations of the Geneva Convention of 1949. He called on the United Nations to do its duty towards the Palestinians

and secure their right to the enjoyment of their natural resources, freedom of movement, a peaceful life and the establishment of an independent State with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital. He also called for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan and the occupied Lebanese territories in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

45. **Mr. Sivagurunathan** (Malaysia) said that, during its 34-year occupation, Israel had clearly established a range of civilian and military installations throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and that settlement sites had been built by civilian and military bodies representing the Government of Israel, as well as by Israeli civilians empowered to do so by their Government. Such activities were in clear violation of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, the principle of land for peace and the agreements reached between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The lifting of the ban on new construction in the territory of the occupied Syrian Golan would continue to pose further difficulties for the Arab population in that area. He therefore hoped that the Committee would adopt a resolution on the subject in order to demonstrate that the international community disapproved of Israel's conduct. He also called on Israel, the occupying Power, not to exploit, to cause loss or depletion of or to endanger the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem.

46. His Government continued to recognize the right of the inhabitants of the occupied territories to claim restitution for any loss caused by such illegal activities. A comprehensive and lasting solution was only possible through a negotiated political settlement, which should include Israel's complete withdrawal from all Arab and Palestinian land occupied since 1967, including Al-Quds al-Sharif. He also reaffirmed his country's support for the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital. Only the implementation of all international resolutions on the question of Palestine could guarantee lasting peace between Israel and Palestine. He called on Israel to comply with all the relevant resolutions and looked forward to the prompt return of the Syrian Golan.

47. **Mr. Hassan** (Pakistan) said that the relentless occupation of the Palestinian territory had led to serious economic, social and environmental

repercussions for the people of Palestine, who were denied their legitimate rights in their homeland. The psychological impact of violent coercion was even more far-reaching. In addition, the Israeli occupation and the frequent border closures of the Palestinian territory had had a severe impact on the economic and social development of the Palestinian people.

48. The geographical distribution of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had severely restricted the growth of Palestinian communities. Those settlements posed threats to the environment; the wildlife and rich biodiversity of the area was harmed by the use of heavy military vehicles and tanks; and deforestation was continuing to the detriment of the Palestinians, who were unable to live on their land and enjoy their natural resources. Many were also detained because of their attempts to cultivate their own land. The macroeconomic impact of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory inhibited investment and growth, as investors were unlikely to come to the rescue of the Palestinians as long as there was no final status agreement. Moreover, the weak legal and institutional environment constituted a continuing obstacle to investment.

49. The situation in the occupied Syrian Golan was no different. The Arab population faced the further deterioration of their living conditions as a result of the restrictions on employment and unreasonable taxation policies. The unequal distribution of land had also aggravated the situation.

50. The volatile situation in Palestine warranted urgent measures. The international community should take immediate steps to facilitate the resumption of the peace process and to bring an immediate end to the violence, heavy-handedness and coercion in the occupied territories. A durable peace, however, could not be established to the detriment of the weaker party. The disproportionate use of force against the Palestinian people and the unabated settlement activities undermined the prospects for peace. The current situation in Palestine therefore demanded the active intervention of the international community to reverse that dangerous trend.

51. For its part, Pakistan extended its unequivocal support to the just struggle of the Palestinian people for the realization of their inalienable rights and reaffirmed its solidarity with them. History bore witness to the fact that the struggle of people against foreign

occupation and for the realization of their right to self-determination could not be suppressed for long. No country should be permitted to occupy and exploit the resources of any territory against the wishes of its people. It was therefore incumbent on the international community to ensure the end of foreign occupation in all parts of the world. All those living under such occupation should be given an opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination.

52. **Ms. Rasheed** (Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply in accordance with rule 115 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, said that numerous other reports in addition to the one just issued, in particular the report of the Commission on Human Rights, were critical of the extremely serious situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. She condemned the myth as repeated in the statement of the Israeli representative and propagated by the Israeli authorities that Israel had offered at Camp David to return the occupied territories in return for peace; no such offer had been made. On the contrary, a genuine offer on the part of the occupying Power would be for it to cease the occupation of the territories occupied since 1967 and join in seeking ways of resolving the outstanding strategic problems, including Jerusalem, the refugees and the modalities of the final status agreement. Instead, violence and terror were continuing in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and it was for Israel to put an end to them. All such issues were matters of strategic concern. Instead of seeking to resolve those issues, Israel was pursuing a policy of carrying out assassinations, closing territories and building settlements. It was also regrettable that the Israeli authorities were engaged in a twofold dialogue: the liberal dialogue of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the one hand, and the hard-line dialogue of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and the extremist elements, on the other.

53. She welcomed the recent statement by the Secretary of State, Mr. Colin Powell, who had called on Israel to make a clear commitment to end the occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory in accordance with the provisions of resolution 242 (1967). The Palestinians would cooperate closely with his team with a view to the implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell Commission and the resumption of negotiations.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.