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Statement by

*H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Abbas
President of the State of Palestine
Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization
President of the Palestinian National Authority*

*at the General Debate
of the 64th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly*

New York, 25 September 2009

H.E. Mr. Ali Treki, President of the General Assembly
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly of the United Nations and to wish you every success in your noble mission, recognizing your long experience in international political affairs. I would also like to extend our greetings and thanks to the former President, H.E. Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, whose active efforts and positions reflected the spirit and principles of this international organization, headed by H.E. the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, whom I salute and express our appreciation for everything he has done personally and through the bodies and agencies of the United Nations, particularly the United Nations Works and Relief Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to assist the Palestinian people and defend their rights.

During this session, we have before us a full agenda. The peoples of the whole world are looking to this august body for what can be done to save our planet from the effects of the climate change and global warming, and for what can be done to address the international financial crisis. There are several countries, including the small States and the developing

countries, which also stress the need to reform the United Nations, including the Security Council, to reflect the reality of the current international situation, and to be more comprehensive in the representation of the international community.

These common concerns must not hide or ignore the fact that there are serious problems facing the Middle East region in particular, first and foremost manifested in the lack of commitment to the Charter of this organization and to what extent the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council are being implemented without applying double standards.

Everyone agrees on the need to achieve peace in the Middle East, counter extremism and violence, and establish the region as a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Yet, the larger wound and deeper tragedy remains the suffering of the Palestinian people since *Al-Nakba* more than sixty years ago, which the United Nations is a living witness to, its archives containing not tens but hundreds of resolutions that have not been implemented.

Mr. President,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The suffering of the Palestinian people as a result of Israel's colonial occupation is crystal clear to the world, since the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, including East Jerusalem, in 1967, Israel continues with its settlement policy on the Palestinian land, especially in Jerusalem, where it is currently being accelerated through various means, including the seizure of the homes of Palestinian inhabitants in the City and the imposition of restrictions and even preventing Palestinians from building and sometimes from repairing their homes, while new settlement neighborhoods are being established and Jerusalem is being completely isolated from its surroundings because of the illegal settlements and the apartheid Wall.

We are facing a unique situation. If international law stipulates the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, how can we deal with the current situation now where Israeli settlement policies will undermine the goal of establishing a geographically contiguous Palestinian State in implementation of the will of the international consensus that has been expressed in the resolutions and principles, including the Road Map, which we all agreed upon, based on the principle of land for peace and ending the occupation that began in 1967.

Immense efforts have been exerted, and many conferences have been held during the past years, particularly since the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993. Yet all of this has not led to a conclusion to this conflict. President Barack Obama has given much hope for our people and peoples of the region when he announced his vision of a peace agreement on the basis of two-State solution and the cessation of all settlement activities. We welcomed the active American diplomacy to revive the peace process and all efforts of the international Quartet and its parties, the United Nations, the European Union and the Russian Federation.

All of these active efforts and initiatives, which have been welcomed and supported by us and by the Arab States, are however confronted with the Israeli intransigence, which refuses to adhere to the requirements for re-launching the peace process.

How is it conceivable that negotiations can be held on the borders and on Jerusalem at the same time that Israeli bulldozers are working to change the reality on the ground with the aim of creating a new reality and imposing the borders as Israel desires? How is it conceivable that negotiations can be held without agreement on the terms of reference and the objective that the whole world has unanimously agreed upon, namely ending the Israeli occupation of the territories occupied in 1967 to establish the State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital, reaching a just and agreed upon solution to the question of Palestinian refugees on the basis of resolution 194 (III) of 1948, and achieving peace on all Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese tracks, as affirmed by the Arab Peace Initiative, which provides a precious opportunity that must be seized upon to achieve peace?

In this regard, I would like to express our deep appreciation for the important speech delivered before this august body two days ago by President Obama, in which he affirmed the necessity for ending the occupation that began in 1967 and the illegitimacy of the settlements. He also stressed the necessity for establishing an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian State and for addressing all of the final-status issues in the negotiations, foremost Jerusalem, refugees, borders, water and others. We affirm that adherence to this basis, in addition to the complete freeze of the settlement activities, can salvage the peace process and open horizons for its success.

Mr. President,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I reaffirm the keenness of the Palestine Liberation Organization to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy. At the same time, I caution that the settlement policy and the building of the separation Wall, which continue to be pursued by the Israeli occupation, will abort opportunities to re-launch the peace process.

Time is running out, and the risks are becoming greater as a result of the continued suffering of the Palestinian people under the last occupation in the world.

We call upon the international community to uphold international law and international legitimacy and to exert pressure on Israel to cease its settlement activities, and to comply with the signed agreements and to desist from the occupation and colonial settlement policies, release the 10,000 prisoners and detainees, and to lift the unjust siege imposed on the Gaza Strip, which was subjected months ago to a devastating aggression, which caused thousands of casualties among civilians, and wrought unprecedented destruction of infrastructure, and public facilities, including hospitals, mosques, schools and United Nations facilities.

Mr. President,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our people, who are adhering to their rights and to remain in their homeland despite all of the suffering caused by the arrests, the blockade, and the killings, are also keen to end the

internal division and to restore their national unity, which brotherly Egypt, Arab countries and other friendly countries are making commendable efforts to achieve. Also, in spite of all our suffering from the occupation and its practices, we continue to work to build and develop our national institutions. We have made significant achievements in this regard, both at the level of upholding the law and public order and promoting economic and social development despite the harsh conditions of the occupation and the blockade. We continue to make every possible effort for the success of the efforts of our brothers in Egypt to end the continued coup in the Gaza Strip and to restore our national unity by resorting to the ballot boxes and holding presidential and legislative elections on their constitutional date under the supervision and control of the Arab and Islamic countries, the United Nations and the international community. Thus, democracy will be firmly institutionalized in our political life.

Mr. President,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Hope will remain alive in our souls, and we will not despair to regain our rights on the basis of relevant resolutions of the United Nations, the historic role of which we reaffirm for attaining peace and upholding the principle of *might for right and not right for might*.

From this podium, I conclude by affirming our commitment to the Road Map plan, the Arab Peace Initiative, and to all terms of reference of the political process, and we call upon all to respect and abide by them to provide the opportunity to launch a successful and effective peace process. We are confident that all our brothers in the sisterly Arab countries will adhere to the Arab Peace Initiative as a basis for safeguarding our rights and to open the way towards real peaceful relations once occupation is ended and the independent State of Palestine is established.

With my profound thanks and appreciation for your kind attention.