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**Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People****Draft programme of work for 2006****I. Mandate of the Committee**

1. The mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the year 2006 is contained in General Assembly resolutions 60/36, 60/37 and 60/38 of 1 December 2005.
2. In its resolution 60/36, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", the General Assembly expressed its appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly and took note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof; requested it to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and authorized it to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session and thereafter. It also requested the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate. It requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to involve additional civil society organizations in its work. The Assembly requested the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they had at their disposal. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all competent bodies of the United Nations, and urged them to take the necessary action, as appropriate.



3. In its resolution 60/37, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continue to carry out its programme of work as detailed in the relevant earlier resolutions, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance, including, in particular, the organization of meetings and conferences in various regions with the participation of all sectors of the international community, the further development and expansion of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), the preparation and widest possible dissemination of publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine and the provision of the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority. The Assembly also requested the Committee and the Division, as part of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November, to continue to organize an annual exhibit on Palestinian rights or a cultural event in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, and encouraged Member States to continue to give the widest support and publicity to the observance of the Day of Solidarity.

4. In its resolution 60/38, entitled "Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat", the General Assembly requested the Department, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments, its special information programme for the biennium 2006-2007, and outlined a number of specific activities to be carried out under the programme.

II. Priority issues in the programme of work of the Committee for 2006

5. The Committee has reviewed the various aspects of its own programme of work and that of the Division for Palestinian Rights, as well as of the mandates governing them. It will continue to make adjustments in this programme in the course of 2006 in order to enhance its responsiveness to developments in the peace process and the situation on the ground, as well as to increase its effectiveness in promoting the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

6. The Committee congratulates the Palestinian people on the successful holding of the elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council. The Committee expresses its hope for the continued unity and success of the Palestinian people in their democratic process and in their endeavour to develop and strengthen national institutions. It expresses its sincere hope that the mandate the newly elected Legislative Council has received from the Palestinian people will lead to positive developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to new steps aimed at ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The opportunity brought about by the democratic elections must be built on and seized by the parties to try to revitalize peace negotiations based on the principles of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

7. The Committee welcomed the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and four small settlements in the northern West Bank as a rare opportunity to revive negotiations within the framework of the road map and to restart the stalled political

process. At the same time, Israel remains in control of the borders of the Gaza Strip, including its territorial sea and airspace, and the movement of people and goods into and out of Gaza. The Committee will support efforts by the Palestinian Authority to revitalize the economy of the Gaza Strip, among other things, through maintaining law and order, establishing a permanent link between Gaza and the West Bank, allowing trade with other countries and encouraging donor countries and private investors to contribute to the economic development of Gaza.

8. The Committee is strongly opposed to the expansion of settlements in the West Bank and efforts to complete the construction of the wall on Palestinian land. It is particularly alarmed by the intention of the Israeli Government to expand large settlement blocks in the West Bank, which would separate East Jerusalem from the West Bank and the southern West Bank from its northern part. The settlements and the wall constructed by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are contrary to international humanitarian law and numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. They seriously hamper efforts to resolve the conflict and may render the prospect of a two-State solution physically impossible to implement. The Committee position is that the international community must ensure that the occupying Power abide by the provisions of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, as demanded by the General Assembly in resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and subsequent General Assembly resolutions. It urges the Secretary-General to expedite the establishment of the register of damage caused by the building of the wall. As requested by the General Assembly, the Committee will continue to keep the situation under review and to promote a constructive analysis and discussion of these issues by the international community.

9. The Committee is gravely concerned at the continuation by Israel, the occupying Power, of illegal settlement activities and its construction of the wall in and around East Jerusalem and further isolation of the city from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which is having a detrimental effect on the lives of Palestinians and could prejudice a final status agreement on Jerusalem. It reiterates that a just solution of the question of Jerusalem is indispensable for achieving a two-State solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and should take fully into account the legitimate concerns of both sides.

10. The Committee remains very concerned about the actions and policies of the occupying Power, including the continuing use of military force throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the practice of collective punishment, extrajudicial assassinations, and the imprisonment of thousands of Palestinians. The Committee believes that a negotiated solution that will end the occupation, ensure the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and provide security for the State of Israel is urgently needed.

11. The Committee continues to believe that the road map remains the most viable means of achieving the goal of a comprehensive, just and lasting resolution of the conflict through the implementation of the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders. This settlement must conform with international law and with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and other relevant United Nations resolutions. The parties should refrain from any unilateral measures that would undermine efforts to achieve a final peace settlement. The Committee has been encouraged by renewed efforts of the international community, in particular the Quartet, but also Egypt and Jordan, to

revitalize the road map, facilitate the dialogue between the parties and implement their commitments. The Committee is of the view, however, that the plan and its time line require adjustment that would take into account the developments on the ground that have taken place in 2005.

12. The Committee is of the view that its programme of activities, mandated by the General Assembly, contributes to focusing the attention of Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and the general public on issues crucial for advancing a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Throughout 2006, its work will remain focused on promoting a better understanding, as gauged by international public opinion, of the importance of the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, namely the right to self-determination, the right to an independent, sovereign State and the right of return, as well as the urgency of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine.

13. As in previous years, the Committee will maintain its support of the Palestinian people and the political process through a variety of activities. In 2006, the Committee will pay special attention to assessing the situation on the ground, and supporting the creation of conditions conducive to the resumption of peace negotiations, including the complete cessation of all acts of violence, such as military attacks, destruction and acts of terror. The Committee will highlight the responsibility of the occupying Power for ending its illegal policies and practices, such as the settlement activity, the construction of the wall and various measures of collective punishment. The Committee will maintain its support for revitalized and active international involvement aimed at encouraging both parties to overcome the current impasse in the peace process, including through the Quartet and the continued personal engagement of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. The Committee will also focus on issues relating the Palestinian economic recovery and the urgency of providing international assistance to the Palestinian people. It will lay special emphasis on raising to a greater extent international awareness of the plight of Palestinian women and children — the most vulnerable segment of the Palestinian society — suffering as a result of the occupation.

14. The Committee attaches great importance to enhancing cooperation and coordination between the Department of Public Information and the Division for Palestinian Rights, in the implementation of their respective mandates. In its resolution 60/38, the General Assembly requested the Department, inter alia, to expand its collection of audio-visual material on the question of Palestine and to continue the production and preservation of such material and the updating of the exhibit in the Secretariat. The Committee will continue to cooperate with the Department in carrying out the various mandated activities.

III. Activities of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights

A. Action by the Committee

15. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee will continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and participate in relevant meetings of the General Assembly and the Security Council. The Committee will

also continue to monitor the situation on the ground and draw the attention of the international community to urgent developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, requiring international action.

16. The Committee, through its Chairman, will continue to participate in relevant intergovernmental and other conferences and meetings, as necessary. The Committee considers this activity an important aspect of its work in promotion of international support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

17. In cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations, the Committee will continue to maintain contacts with the Palestinian Authority and other institutions, including civil society, in the areas under its jurisdiction and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Following the practice of the previous years, the Committee will continue to invite Palestinian officials and other Palestinian personalities to meetings with members and observers of the Committee and the Secretariat, as required.

18. The Bureau of the Committee will continue consultations with Governments and intergovernmental organizations interested in its programme of work, including members of the European Union and the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and others. These exchanges should help to promote understanding of the Committee mandate and objectives.

B. International meetings and conferences

19. The Committee considers that its programme of international meetings and conferences facilitates discussion and analysis of the various aspects of the question of Palestine. The meetings highlight the most pressing issues, such as the need to end violence, stop settlement activities and improve the living conditions of the Palestinian population. They contribute to raising international awareness of the root cause of the conflict, namely the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. They also mobilize international support for efforts to resolve the conflict and implement the road map. The Committee highly appreciates the involvement in these meetings of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities and civil society, and encourages them to continue and to increase the level of engagement and support for a just solution of the conflict. It will continue to carry out this programme to foster support for the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in accordance with international legitimacy.

20. In its programme of meetings and conferences for 2006, the Committee intends to address issues such as the need to end the occupation of all Palestinian land; the importance of supporting the Palestinian Authority in its efforts to rehabilitate the economy, especially that of the Gaza Strip; the responsibility of all Governments for applying international law to all aspects of the question of Palestine in accordance with the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice; the urgency of resuming the political process and implementing the road map; the adverse consequences of the settlement policy and the construction of the wall for the achievement of a two-State solution; the need to protect the Palestinian

people; the humanitarian and socio-economic situation, including the plight of Palestinian women and children; and the role of civil society.

21. In 2006, the Committee, in cooperation with prospective host countries, organizations and relevant Secretariat services, will do its utmost to ensure the success of its programme of meetings and conferences. In so doing, it will keep in mind the need for economy and the most cost-effective utilization of resources. The Committee will continue to make an effort to encourage participation by countries and organizations that so far have not engaged fully in its programme of work.

22. The Committee intends to organize the following international meetings and conferences in 2006:

- United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People
- United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace. The meeting will be followed by an NGO event in support of Israeli-Palestinian peace
- United Nations Asian Meeting on the Question of Palestine. The meeting will be followed by an NGO event in solidarity with the Palestinian people
- United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian peace

C. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

23. The Committee commends civil society organizations for their efforts to uphold international legitimacy with regard to the question of Palestine through advocacy and mobilizing public opinion, as well as for their humanitarian and assistance initiatives aimed at alleviating the suffering of the Palestinian people and improving their living conditions. The Committee welcomes initiatives aimed at promoting the implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions. It encourages civil society organizations to focus and synchronize their advocacy efforts, at the local, national, regional and international levels, on the legal obligations of Governments, as elucidated in the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, and to coordinate their activities. It supports recent civil society initiatives, including in developing countries, to establish umbrella mechanisms to better coordinate their work. The Committee also backs all humanitarian and assistance initiatives geared towards improving the daily lives of the Palestinians. The Committee considers that it is particularly important to build bridges of understanding and trust between the Israeli and Palestinian civil societies and to promote common goals of peace between the two peoples.

24. The Committee intends to continue to invite civil society organizations to all international meetings and conferences organized under its auspices. At these events, it will encourage them to discuss their own initiatives and campaigns and to exchange views and ideas on issues of mutual interest. The participation of Governments and intergovernmental and civil society organizations in such meetings and conferences should offer a unique opportunity to develop and strengthen initiatives, by all strata of the international community with a view to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict. In particular and wishing to promote the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, the Committee looks forward to productive and mutually beneficial engagement by Israeli and Palestinian participants at events organized under its auspices.

25. The Committee will maintain and further develop its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms on the question of Palestine, in addition to the established liaison with a large number of individual civil society organizations. It will continue to accredit new organizations. Periodic meetings of consultations with civil society representatives will contribute to further enhancement of the Committee's programme of cooperation with civil society.

26. The Committee is of the view that it is important to continue to exchange information with civil society on respective current and planned activities. The Committee requests the Division to obtain information and report periodically on civil society initiatives, in order to enhance the interaction between civil society and the Committee. It also requests the Division to continue to develop and regularly update its Internet website on civil society organization activities on the question of Palestine (www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo) as a central tool for the exchange of information and communication between the United Nations and civil society.

27. In 2006, the resources available for cooperation with civil society will be used for the following activities:

(a) Organization, whenever appropriate and feasible, of meetings of civil society organizations in conjunction with international meetings and conferences held under the auspices of the Committee;

(b) Participation of representatives of the Committee and the Division in important forums and other events worldwide organized by civil society organizations;

(c) Periodic meetings of consultations with various civil society organizations with a view to briefing them on the activities of the Committee and assessing their needs that can be met through the Division's programme of work;

(d) Providing assistance to Palestinian organizations in sending their representatives to meetings held under the auspices of the Committee or supported by the Committee.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

28. The Committee believes that national parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations play an important role in shaping public opinion and formulating policy guidelines and as it relates to upholding international legitimacy in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. It is of the view that the experience and political weight of lawmakers and their organizations can be instrumental in consolidating the democratic process and institution-building in the territory under the Palestinian Authority, in strengthening political dialogue between the parties and in applying the principles of international law to efforts to resolve the conflict. The Committee reaffirms the continuing importance of developing closer cooperation with parliaments and representatives of inter-parliamentary bodies in order to encourage the discussion within the respective parliaments and among all strata of society of ways of supporting peace in the Middle East and resolving the question of Palestine. To that end, the Committee will

strive to involve parliamentarians and representatives of inter-parliamentary organizations in international conferences and meetings organized under its auspices. Consultations between the Committee and representatives of parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations, notably the Inter-Parliamentary Union, should improve cooperation between the two sides. The Committee will also make an effort to involve members of the Knesset and the Palestinian Legislative Council in events organized under its auspices.

D. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

29. The Committee requests the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue its work on the further development, expansion and administration of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) featured on the "Question of Palestine" website. The Division will make an effort to launch the site's portal, designed under the guidance of the Bureau, and will continue to redesign the various web pages of the site. The Division will continue to make the UNISPAL collection of United Nations and related documents comprehensive, and up to date and its access modalities and displays user-friendlier. The Committee requests the Division to report periodically to the Bureau on the status of UNISPAL work accomplished and on progress achieved in the system's development.

E. Publications programme

30. The Committee considers that the Division's publications programme contributes to heightening international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine, involvement of the United Nations and the work of the Committee, its mandate and objectives. The Division should continue this important information and outreach activity, under the guidance of the Committee, and issue the following programmed publications in a timely manner:

- Monthly bulletin on action by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine
- Periodic review of developments relating to the Middle East peace process
- Monthly chronological review of events relating to the question of Palestine
- Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine
- Reports of international meetings and conferences held under the auspices of the Committee
- Annual bulletin on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
- "NGO Action News", a bimonthly summary of information on civil society activities on the question of Palestine

31. The Committee believes that the Division, in consultation with the Bureau, should continue to review the existing publications and make proposals with regard to those that require updating.

F. Other activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights

Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

32. The Committee considers that, in the light of its importance and usefulness to the Palestinian Authority, the Division should continue the training programme in 2006. The Committee is of the view that, in selecting candidates for this annual programme, special consideration should be given to achieving gender balance.

Observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

33. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People will be observed on Wednesday, 29 November 2006. It is envisaged that special meetings in observance of the Day will take place at United Nations Headquarters, at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna and elsewhere, in accordance with established practice. During the week of 29 November, a Palestinian exhibit or a cultural event will be organized at United Nations Headquarters in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations.

34. The Committee will continue to review and assess its programme of work in the light of the situation on the ground and new developments in the political process, and will make adjustments as necessary.

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/60/35).*