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President: Ms. Chatardova (Vice-President) (Czechia)

Contents

Agenda item 14: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Agenda item 16: Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

Agenda item 15: Regional cooperation

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In the absence of Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 14: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/72/69, A/72/87-E/2017/67 and E/2017/59)

Agenda item 16: Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/72/90-E/2017/71)

1. **Mr. Alami** (Director, Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues Section, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/72/90-E/2017/71), said that serious concerns remained about the use of force and unlawful killings by Israeli security forces, including some cases that might have amounted to extrajudicial executions. Settler-related violence and the withholding of the bodies of Palestinian suspects had also been issues of concern during the reporting period. In addition, large numbers of Palestinians, including children, were being held in Israeli prisons or under administrative detention. The Committee against Torture had expressed concern about Israeli practices towards Palestinian detainees, yet no criminal investigation had been opened into more than 1,000 complaints of torture or ill-treatment filed since 2001. Israeli authorities had also continued to destroy and confiscate property and infrastructure, and over 1,000 Palestinians had been displaced as a result of home demolitions.

2. Israeli settlement activity and policies violated international law and Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016). The settler population in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, had doubled since the Oslo Accords, and 40 per cent more housing construction projects in West Bank settlements had begun in 2016 than in 2015.

3. Turning to the issue of movement and access restrictions, he said that the closures in Gaza, and multiple military confrontations, had exacerbated the

humanitarian crisis, while 44 per cent of West Bank land was off limits to Palestinian construction and development. Checkpoints, earth mounds, roadblocks and road gates continued to obstruct movement in the West Bank, where Israel continued to construct its “barrier”, contrary to the 2004 International Court of Justice advisory opinion.

4. The population of Gaza was still suffering the repercussions of the 2014 military conflict, with a chronic fuel and electricity deficit and inadequate access to water and sanitation infrastructure, resulting in water consumption at levels well below World Health Organization recommendations. In the West Bank, difficulties in obtaining permits for water infrastructure projects meant that Palestinians were being denied their right to access water.

5. After a sharp contraction in the aftermath of the 2014 Gaza military conflict, the economy of Palestine had recorded modest growth since the second half of 2015. However, there were stark differences between living conditions in Gaza and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In Gaza, unemployment was still high and a food security crisis had been averted only through large-scale international and humanitarian aid. Grave violations continued to affect access to education in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In Gaza, where most schools continued to operate on a double-shift basis, refugee children had fewer opportunities to engage in recreational and creative pursuits than students attending single-shift schools. Public health was also a major concern, with overcrowding, substandard housing conditions and improper waste disposal heightening the risks in Gaza, and restrictive Israeli permit requirements being imposed on West Bank residents for medical appointments outside Palestinian territory.

6. In the occupied Syrian Golan, Israeli authorities had begun home demolitions, settlements had continued to expand in violation of international law and Israeli settlers were allowed to use much more land and water than Syrian farmers. Israeli and foreign-owned companies had continued to explore and exploit natural resources after receiving licences from the Israeli authorities.

7. Fifty years of occupation had severely limited social and economic development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan. Adherence to international law was imperative so that all peoples in the region, including those under occupation, could enjoy justice and peace.

8. **Mr. Francis** (Lebanon), speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, said that, while the Group greatly

appreciated the efforts of ESCWA in drafting the report, it had a number of criticisms regarding its content. Several paragraphs used the term “Israeli security forces” to refer to Israeli occupation forces in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. Such a term could give a misleading impression of the nature of those forces. In previous reports, such as the one issued in 2015 (A/70/82-E/2015-13), the terms “Israeli forces” or “Israeli military and security forces” had been used. Paragraph 10 of the current report should have made distinctions between the Israeli occupation army, Israeli settlers and Israeli civilians living within Israeli borders. In addition, while paragraph 45 of the Arabic version of the current report referred to the “wall” being built by Israel on Palestinian land, the English version used the word “barrier”, even though the legal term “wall”, used by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 9 July 2004, had appeared throughout the 2015 report. ESCWA must also devote attention to vital issues related to the Palestinian economy, such as the gas fields in the Mediterranean Sea west of the Gaza Strip and the oil fields west of Ramallah. His delegation had previously asked for those issues to be included and discussed in the reports prepared by the Commission. In addition, future reports should give due attention to the importance of the Palestinian tourism sector, which had the potential to drive economic development in the State of Palestine but which faced great obstacles under the Israeli occupation.

9. **Ms. Shurbaji** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that while the report described practices in violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law, such as the appropriation of land and housing or the unjust allocation of water for Syrian farmers by Israel, it neglected to condemn them explicitly or state the Organization’s official position on them. Furthermore, no reference was made in the report to the position of the United Nations on the Israeli Cabinet meeting of 17 April 2016 held in the occupied Syrian Golan, even though Security Council resolution 497 (1981) had affirmed that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights was null and void and without international legal effect.

10. No further evidence was needed to show that the occupying Power had not complied with United Nations resolutions affirming the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, development and sovereignty over natural resources. Israeli violations had continued since the beginning of the occupation, and the recent actions of the occupying

Power at the Aqsa Mosque and towards Palestinian detainees were merely fresh examples thereof.

11. The occupying Power did not merely exert influence over the inhabitants of the occupied territories, but also provided financial and logistical support to armed terrorist groups in the area of separation in the Syrian Golan, with serious repercussions for the Syrian villagers there. Her delegation therefore called on ESCWA to clearly condemn all violations committed by the occupation authorities, including their support for terrorism against Syrians, in its future reports.

12. **Ms. Engelbrecht Schadtler** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the Israeli occupation was in clear violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The ESCWA report demonstrated the constant obstacles to daily life imposed by Israel on the State of Palestine, causing impoverishment and economic decline. Those discriminatory actions, accompanied by persistent military aggressions against the Palestinian people and their infrastructure, directly affected sustainable social and economic development in the occupied territories. The report highlighted the high socioeconomic costs associated with the occupation, as well as the segregation and displacement of the Palestinian people, illegal settlement construction and restrictions on freedom of movement.

13. The sovereign management of natural resources should be an effective and legitimate instrument for the development of the peoples that owned them. Their illegal exploitation by third parties, particularly colonialist Powers, not only violated the sovereignty of countries but also led to poverty and despair. Financing mechanisms to support the development of peoples had been discussed at length but, without the use of their own natural resources, developing countries, particularly the State of Palestine, could not embark on a path of sustainable growth or meet the Sustainable Development Goals. More information was therefore necessary regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in occupied territories.

14. **Mr. Shawesh** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the 2017 report was shorter than the previous one and contained fewer footnotes. It also deliberately contained facts that had been taken out of context, as in paragraph 6, which made reference to “hundreds of small-scale plans” that had been “approved for Palestinians in recent years”. Similarly, paragraph 51 attributed the electricity shortage in the Gaza Strip to internal Palestinian disputes, citing the Gaza situation report issued on 27 January 2017 by the United Nations

Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); however, the report cited did not support that conclusion. The ESCWA report also focused unduly on Israeli sources. Paragraph 20, for example, which discussed the challenges faced by Palestinian fishermen, ended with the Israeli justification of the harassment without citing a credible, non-Israeli source. The situation in East Jerusalem, including the practices aimed at Judaizing the city and expelling its residents, as had been corroborated by United Nations reports, had not been sufficiently addressed. Future reports should contain a special section on the economic and social repercussions of Israeli policies in East Jerusalem.

15. In addition, the report had failed to mention the racist laws adopted by the Knesset and the statements made by Israeli officials on annexing the West Bank and imposing Israeli law there, even though such laws and statements had a significant economic and social impact on the lives of Palestinians living under occupation.

16. **Mr. Alami** (Director of Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues Section, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), responding to the comments made by delegations, said that the report contained data from authoritative and reliable sources, including United Nations bodies and agencies, renowned international and Israeli non-governmental organizations and official governmental sources. The report had been a collaborative effort involving 14 United Nations agencies, which had provided information, feedback, comments and suggestions during the drafting process.

Draft resolution E/2017/L.34: Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

17. **Mr. Córdova** (Observer for Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced the draft resolution.

18. **Ms. Herity** (Secretary of the Council) said that Turkey had joined the sponsors.

19. **The President** said that a recorded vote had been requested. The draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

20. **Ms. Raadik** (Estonia), speaking on behalf of the European Union in explanation of vote before the voting, said that European Union members of the Council would support the draft resolution with the understanding that the use of the term “Palestine” should not be construed

as recognition of a State of Palestine. In addition, such usage was without prejudice to the individual positions of European Union member States on that issue and, consequently, on the question of validity of an accession to the conventions and treaties mentioned in the draft resolution. Moreover, the European Union had not expressed a legal qualification with respect to the use of the term “forced displacement” in the resolution and had not expressed itself on the use of certain legal terms therein. In addition, the European Union and its member States understood the term “Palestinian Government” to refer to the Palestinian Authority.

21. **Mr. Córdova** (Observer for Ecuador) said that he would like to know which delegation had requested a recorded vote.

22. **The President** said that the delegation of the United States had requested the recorded vote.

23. **Ms. Amadeo** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that the resolution and the report were one-sided and biased against Israel. The United States was committed to supporting the Palestinian people in practical and effective ways, including through financial support to UNRWA, as well as through financial contributions to bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes for the Palestinian people. The United States shared with many members of the international community the goal of advancing Israeli-Palestinian peace and believed that the conflict could be ended only through direct bilateral negotiations. Her delegation had no choice but to vote against the counterproductive resolution under discussion.

24. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Czechia, Estonia, France, Germany, Ghana, Guyana, India, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Mauritania, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Burkina Faso, Honduras, Japan.

25. Draft resolution [E/2017/L.34](#) was adopted by 45 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions.

26. **The President** suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to the Palestinian people ([A/72/87-E/2017/67](#)), under agenda item 14.

27. *It was so decided.*

28. **Mr. Shawesh** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the report and resolution were neither one-sided nor political. They did not take a position against the occupying Power, but rather against its practices. His delegation would review the current report, which was weak, and would provide further comments.

29. **Mr. Amer** (Observer for Israel) said that the resolution and the report were one-sided and presented a distorted picture of the situation on the ground. The resolution emphasized the dire conditions in the Gaza Strip but made no mention of Hamas, which controlled Gaza through violence and repression. It also referred to the repercussions of the 2014 hostilities, but failed to mention that Hamas had initiated those hostilities. Furthermore, it not only neglected to note the failures of the Palestinian Authority but even commended it for improving governance, the rule of law and human rights.

30. Unsurprisingly, the resolution did not mention positive recent developments, such as the agreement signed in September 2016 to resolve a long-running dispute over the Palestinian Authority's debt to the Israel Electric Corporation. The agreement would ensure a consistent supply of electricity for Palestinians and would give the Palestinian Authority responsibility for managing the Palestinian energy market. Israel would also begin providing water to the Palestinians at reduced prices pursuant to a recent agreement with Jordan and the Palestinian Authority.

31. The resolution disregarded the region's grave ills, including by calling on Israel to open its borders and facilitate visits to Syria. The Palestinian leadership continued to exploit religion in fomenting anti-Israel hatred among its youth. The previous week, an Israeli family had been celebrating the birth of a new grandchild when a Palestinian terrorist had entered their home and murdered three people. The crime had occurred in the wake of false accusations by Palestinian leaders surrounding prior events in Jerusalem.

32. The resolution did not enhance cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians, nor did it improve the lives of Palestinians. The conflict caused socioeconomic hardship on both sides. Thus, any effective solution must start at the negotiating table.

33. **Mr. Ramírez Carreño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his delegation totally rejected the refusal by Israel to respect both the opinion of the international community and the United Nations resolutions aimed at resolving the question of Palestine. Fifty years after its occupation of the Palestinian territories, the Israeli Government was showing no signs of making progress towards the two-State solution agreed on and supported by the vast majority of Member States in the General Assembly and the Security Council. The attitude of Israel towards the United Nations was of great concern. Israel even tried to present itself as the victim of the violence, when in fact such violence was generated by its occupation of Palestinian lands and it constantly wielded its overwhelming military might over the Palestinian people. While the resolution just adopted was not as strong as many had wished, it sent a message to Israel to heed the resolutions of the United Nations and to work towards a political solution of the conflict.

34. Speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Special Committee on Decolonization, he introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations ([A/72/69](#)). Just three years from the end of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, 17 territories remained on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Organization must continue to lead the political process associated with decolonization.

35. The cross-cutting nature of many of the challenges facing several Non-Self-Governing Territories in an increasingly interconnected world had become apparent at the Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, held in Managua from 31 May 2016 to 2 June 2016. Participants had highlighted the need to step up efforts, with the relevant stakeholders and on a case-by-case basis, to strengthen the administrative capacity, good governance and economic sustainability of the Territories so as to enable them to address those challenges in a holistic manner. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda had been the main focus of the Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, held in Kingstown from 16 to 18 May 2017. The issues relating to the implementation of that Agenda, especially its economic dimension, required urgent attention, in light of the overlaps with the Plan of Action for the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

36. The Non-Self-Governing Territories still faced multiple challenges in securing their right to self-determination, including independence. The decolonization process must ensure that the new political entities emerging from the process were in a position to implement the 2030 Agenda and thereby further their development and consolidate their sovereignty. The specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system were therefore called upon to take appropriate measures to accelerate progress in the economic and social sectors of the Territories. Their continuous cooperation and assistance would undoubtedly help fulfil the Special Committee's mandate and was needed more than ever before.

37. Whereas none of the invited agencies had participated in the 2016 Pacific regional seminar, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Programme had participated in the 2017 Caribbean regional seminar. The agencies had provided valuable information on key issues such as natural disaster impact reduction programmes, economic development programmes, child welfare and the impact of political changes in the administering Powers. He urged all agencies to circulate more information about their activities in the Non-Self-Governing Territories among the members of the Special Committee, especially through the regional seminars. He was encouraged that 10 funds, programmes and specialized agencies had contributed to the report of the President of the Council (E/2017/59), four more than in the previous year, and urged those that had not done so to contribute to the report in the future.

Draft resolution E/2017/L.33: Support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations

38. **Mr. Ramírez Carreño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) introduced the draft resolution.

39. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

40. **Mr. Aleksaev** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation actively supported the rights of people in Non-Self-Governing Territories to self-determination, independence and development, with the United Nations assisting that process. However, duplicating that discussion in the Council distracted the Council from its primary function of coordinating the activities of the United Nations in the social and economic spheres. Therefore, the Russian Federation customarily

abstained from voting on the draft resolution in question.

41. **The President** said that a recorded vote had been requested on the draft resolution.

42. **Ms. Amadeo** (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that her delegation would abstain from voting on the draft resolution because, although it agreed in principle that United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies could provide useful support to territories that were not members of the Organization so long as the domestic laws and policies of the territory's administering Power allowed such support, it was the responsibility of the administering Power to determine the nature of participation in the United Nations system. To the extent that the language used in the draft resolution was inconsistent with the internal constitutional arrangements of the United States in that regard, her delegation could not support it.

43. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Australia, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Chile, China, Honduras, India, Lebanon, Mauritania, Pakistan, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chad, Czechia, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Nigeria, Norway, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

44. *Draft resolution E/2017/L.33 was adopted by 21 votes to 0, with 22 abstentions.*

45. **Ms. Mac Loughlin** (Argentina) said that the resolution should be implemented in accordance with the relevant pronouncements of the United Nations and the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee regarding specific Territories.

46. **Mr. Diebolt** (France) said that, as in previous years, his delegation had abstained because it believed that the resolution did not fall under the purview of the work of the Council. It was moreover regrettable that

prior consultations had not been held on the resolution, which revealed unsatisfactory working methods.

47. **The President** suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/72/87-E/2017/67).

48. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 15: Regional cooperation (E/2017/15, E/2017/15/Add.1, E/2017/15/Add.2, E/2017/16, E/2017/17, E/2017/18, E/2017/19, E/2017/20 and E/2017/21)

49. **Mr. Nour** (Director, Regional Commissions New York Office), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2017/15) and its two addenda, entitled, respectively, “Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and Economic Commission for Europe (E/2017/15/Add.1) and “Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific” (E/2017/15/Add.2), said that the report provided regional perspectives on important global issues and on the work done by the regional commissions, with a particular focus on efforts to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality.

50. Measuring poverty and monitoring levels of inequality to assist policymakers with reliable data and evidence-based analysis was crucial to supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The regional commissions, which for years had been working on that issue and seeking to address the root causes of inequality, had developed methodological tools for measuring income poverty and multi-dimensional income poverty, as well as tool boxes to address inequality and social protection. They had also helped their countries to conceptualize, design and implement public policies oriented towards greater socioeconomic equality, including through a joint Development Account project for the 2014–2017 period, and had put forward policy recommendations for eradicating poverty and reducing inequality.

51. The report also provided regional perspectives on global migration, examining migration trends ahead of the intergovernmental conference on safe, orderly and regular migration to be held in 2018. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/280, the regional commissions were convening consultations so as to

incorporate regional and subregional perspectives into the stocktaking process.

52. The regional commissions continued to promote coherence at the regional level through their respective regional coordination mechanisms, which provided a critical bridge between the United Nations system organizations and regional and subregional organizations outside that system. Enhanced interregional cooperation among the regional commissions had allowed them to forge coordinated positions and responses in support of the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development agenda and climate change challenges. They had also held ministerial sessions and high-level meetings that had resulted in the regionally agreed policy declarations, decisions and resolutions brought to the Council’s attention in the two addendums to the report.

Action on recommendations contained in the first addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2017/15/Add.1)

53. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft resolutions contained in chapter I, sections A and B, of the first addendum to the report.

Section A

Draft resolution: Admission of Turkey as a member State of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

54. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

55. **Mr. Altınörs** (Turkey) said that ECLAC had contributed significantly to its region’s economic growth and industrialization through comprehensive sustainable development strategies. Turkey stood ready to enhance its cooperation and upgrade its relations with the countries of that region. Such partnerships would be strengthened by the robust institutional framework provided by ECLAC.

Section B

Draft resolution: Economic Commission for Europe Inland Transport Committee

56. **The President** proposed that the Council should send the draft resolution entitled “Economic Commission for Europe Inland Transport Committee” back to the Economic Commission for Europe for its reconsideration.

57. *It was so decided.*

58. **The President** suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2017/15) and its addenda (E/2017/15/Add.1 and E/2017/15/Add.2), document E/2017/16, entitled “Economic situation in the Economic Commission for Europe region (Europe, North America and the Commonwealth of Independent States), 2016–2017”, document E/2017/17, entitled “Overview of economic and social conditions in Africa, 2017”, document E/2017/18, entitled “Summary of the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2017*”, document E/2017/19, entitled “Economic situation and outlook for Latin America and the Caribbean for the period 2016–2017”, document E/2017/20, entitled “Economic and social developments in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region for the period 2016–2017” and document E/2017/21, entitled “Project for a Europe-Africa fixed link through the Strait of Gibraltar”.

59. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.