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**Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian
and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations,
including special economic assistance**

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associated with the United Nations**

Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution [73/256](#), contains an assessment of the assistance received by the Palestinian people, an assessment of the needs still unmet and proposals for responding to them. It provides a description of the efforts made by the United Nations, in cooperation with the Government of Palestine, donors and civil society, to support the Palestinian population and institutions.

The reporting period (1 April 2018–31 March 2019) was characterized by continued tensions and violence and the persistence of negative trends, further impeding the resumption of meaningful negotiations and affecting prospects for peace. The fiscal performance of the Palestinian Authority worsened, and total overseas development assistance declined sharply, leaving significant unmet needs.

During the reporting period, the United Nations continued to coordinate and deliver humanitarian and development assistance to the occupied Palestinian territory. A portion of that assistance targeted Palestinian individuals and communities in areas beyond the reach of the Palestinian Authority, including East Jerusalem and Area C, in the West Bank, and Gaza.

Under the Humanitarian Response Plan for the occupied Palestinian territory, \$350 million is sought for 2019 to provide basic food, protection, health care, shelter, water and sanitation to 1.4 million Palestinians who have been identified as those most in need of humanitarian interventions across the occupied Palestinian territory.

* [A/74/50](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution [73/256](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its seventy-fourth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of the resolution, containing an assessment of the assistance actually received by the Palestinian people, an assessment of the needs still unmet and specific proposals for responding effectively to them. The reporting period is from April 2018 to March 2019.

2. Information on the political and socioeconomic situation is provided in several periodic reports prepared by United Nations entities and submitted to various United Nations bodies, including the monthly Security Council briefings by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process; the report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia 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; the annual report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); and the biannual reports of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians.

3. The humanitarian, economic and development needs of the Palestinian people are reflected in several complementary strategic and resource mobilization documents. Under the Humanitarian Response Plan, \$350 million is sought for 2019 to provide basic food, protection, health care, shelter, water and sanitation to 1.4 million Palestinians who have been identified as those most in need of humanitarian interventions across the occupied Palestinian territory. That is less than the amount sought for 2018, when 1.9 million Palestinians were targeted for assistance at a total cost of \$539.7 million. The reduction in the amount of funding requested and the number of people targeted does not, however, reflect a reduction in the level of humanitarian need in the occupied Palestinian territory.

4. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2018–2022 presents the United Nations strategic response to Palestinian development priorities contained in the Palestinian National Policy Agenda for 2017–2022. The Framework places the Palestinian people at the centre of development programming, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and requires financial resources of approximately \$1.26 billion over five years, namely from 2018 to 2022.

5. Throughout the year, the Office of the Special Coordinator continued its efforts to support conflict prevention and a return to peace negotiations, and to promote coordination among the Government of Palestine, the United Nations, the international community and the Government of Israel.

II. Overview of the current situation

A. Political context

6. The reporting period was characterized by continued tensions and violence on the ground and the persistence of negative trends, further impeding a resumption of meaningful negotiations to end the Israeli occupation and resolve the conflict with a view to achieving the two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 borders and in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and prior agreements. The dire humanitarian, economic and political situation in Gaza continues to be

compounded by severe movement and access restrictions imposed by Israel and divisions among the Palestinian factions that have persisted and have had negative implications on the socioeconomic, humanitarian and social aspects of life in the occupied Palestinian territory, most acutely in Gaza. Since March 2018, weekly protests along the perimeter fence between Gaza and Israel, in the context of the “Great March of Return” demonstrations, have witnessed increasing levels of violence, resulting in large numbers of Palestinians killed and injured by Israeli security forces. Israeli towns adjacent to the Gaza Strip were targeted by rockets, mortars and incendiary devices launched from Gaza by Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups. In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the situation remained volatile, with clashes, arrests, terrorist attacks and Israeli military operations taking place against the backdrop of the continued expansion of illegal settlement activities, violence between Israeli settlers and Palestinian civilians, the demolition and seizure of Palestinian structures and intensifying political challenges and financial pressures on the Palestinian Authority.

7. United Nations and Egyptian efforts to de-escalate the situation in Gaza continued throughout the reporting period, with the aim of avoiding war between Hamas and Israel by focusing on calming tensions, promoting humanitarian and economic assistance, promoting the easing of the closures and supporting efforts to advance Palestinian unity, including the return of Gaza under the full control of a single and legitimate Palestinian Government. Egypt continued to play a central role in those efforts, and Qatar and other donors provided crucial financial support towards meeting the most urgent needs of the population. There was no progress made on intra-Palestinian reconciliation.

8. In the occupied West Bank, the illegal planning, tendering and building of new housing units in settlements continued, with most indicators pointing to an increase compared with the previous reporting period. In Area C, Israeli authorities advanced plans for some 5,500 units and announced tenders for 3,300 more, compared with 4,500 and 1,200, respectively, during the previous reporting period. In East Jerusalem settlements, 2,100 units were advanced in the planning process, compared with 2,300 in the previous reporting period. Efforts to retroactively legalize structures deemed illegal under Israeli law in settlements continued.

9. The President of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, called for legislative elections, following a decision of the Palestinian Constitutional Court in December, and dissolved the Palestinian Legislative Council. At the time of writing, no moves had been undertaken to that end. On 10 March, President Abbas appointed Mohammad Shtayyeh as the new Prime Minister, tasked with forming a new government. In February 2019, Israel began implementing a law, passed by the Knesset in July 2018, under which the Israeli Government is required to freeze, from the clearance revenues it collects on behalf of and transfers to the Palestinian Authority, an amount equal to what Israel assesses to be the sums paid by the Authority “directly or indirectly” to Palestinians or to the families of Palestinians convicted by Israeli courts of involvement in alleged “terrorist activities” or other security-related offenses, as defined by Israeli law. In response, the Palestinian Authority informed the Israeli Government of its rejection of that unilateral decision, stating that, under the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, no amount may be deducted without the consent of both parties, that it would not cease its social welfare payments to the families of prisoners and that it would refuse to accept any amounts of clearance revenues from Israel unless the full amount payable was provided. That situation is further compounding a prolonged decline in donor funding.

B. Humanitarian and socioeconomic context

Economic and fiscal developments

10. The economic conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory during the reporting period were characterized by stagnant growth and rising unemployment. In 2018, gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 0.9 per cent, owing to a 3.1 per cent growth in the West Bank and a 6.9 per cent contraction in Gaza. Gaza saw eight consecutive quarters of GDP contraction between the first quarter of 2017 and the fourth quarter of 2018.

11. At the end of 2018, the unemployment rate in the West Bank was 16.1 per cent, while that in Gaza was 50.5 per cent, bringing the unemployment rate for the occupied Palestinian territory to 29.1 per cent.

12. The fiscal performance of the Palestinian Authority worsened, and international development assistance declined sharply, leaving significant unmet needs on the ground. In February 2019, the Palestinian Authority faced a further fiscal setback when the Israeli Government withheld a portion of the monthly transferred clearance revenue (see para. 9 above). The Palestinian Authority responded by suspending its annual budget for 2019 and replacing it with an emergency budget. The austerity measures contained in the emergency budget are expected to have a negative impact on the Palestinian economy.

Humanitarian developments

13. The reporting period witnessed a significant increase in violence and injuries compared with the previous period. Overall in the reporting period, violence across the occupied Palestinian territory resulted in the highest number of Palestinian fatalities by the Israeli security forces since 2014, with 299 Palestinians killed, and the highest number of recorded injuries since 2005, with 32,696 Palestinians injured. Most Palestinian fatalities (199) and 30,200 injuries occurred in Gaza in the context of the “Great March of Return” protests, with a quarter of the wounded injured by live ammunition. There were also 14 Israeli fatalities and 137 injuries.

14. In the reporting period, 60 Palestinian children (57 boys and 3 girls) and 4 women were killed in the occupied Palestinian territory, and 6,713 children and 1,812 women were injured. Most child fatalities (53) and injuries occurred in Gaza, in the context of the “Great March of Return”. In 2018, Palestinian children continued to be arrested and detained by the Israeli security forces for alleged security offences, in particular, throwing stones and Molotov cocktails during clashes. According to the Israel Prison Service, at the end of December 2018, of the 203 children detained, 93 were held in pretrial detention and/or during trial. Two children were held in administrative detention at the end of 2018.

15. A significant increase in settler-related violence in the West Bank in 2018. During the reporting period, 4 Palestinians were killed by Israeli settlers and 120 were injured, including at least 22 children. Palestinians also perpetrated attacks, with 6 settlers killed and 32 injured.

16. In January 2019, the Government of Israel decided not to renew the mandate of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron beyond 31 January. The Temporary International Presence provided observation and protective presence for some 7,000 Palestinians living in the H2 zone of the city. On 1 February, the Foreign Ministers of the five contributing countries (Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey) issued a joint statement regretting the unilateral decision taken by Israel and stated that it constituted a “departure” from the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the

West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo II Accords) and undermined one of the few established mechanisms for conflict resolution between Israelis and Palestinians.

17. The demolition of Palestinian residential, livelihood and service infrastructure in the West Bank continued. During the reporting period, the Israeli authorities demolished or seized 502 Palestinian-owned structures throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, displacing 593 Palestinians, half of them children, compared with 314 structures demolished and 448 people displaced during the previous reporting period. Of the demolished structures, 65 had been provided by donors as humanitarian assistance.

18. During the reporting period, four Palestinian households were forcibly evicted after settlers took over their homes in East Jerusalem, affecting 21 people, including 10 children. As at January 2019, it is estimated that approximately 200 Palestinian households have eviction cases filed against them in East Jerusalem, placing more than 870 people at risk of displacement. In Area C, there are more than 13,000 Palestinian-owned structures against which demolition orders have been issued. Whole communities remain at the risk of forcible transfer with the still-impending case of Khan al-Ahmar-Abu al-Helu most prominent in 2018.

Movement, humanitarian access and operational space

19. During the reporting period, a multi-layered system of administrative and physical constraints on Palestinians imposed by Israel, citing security concerns, remained in place, including to fishing areas and farming lands near the fence inside Gaza and throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Palestinian movement is still restricted in East Jerusalem, with West Bank identification card holders, except men over 55 and women over 50, needing permits to enter the city, and in the Israeli-controlled area of Hebron (H2 zone), where more than 100 obstacles, including 18 permanent checkpoints, separate part of the H2 zone from the rest of the city. Nearly 30 per cent of Area C is designated as “firing zones” for Israeli military training, where residence or access is prohibited.

20. The closures on the Gaza Strip, imposed by Israel citing security concerns, continued. Only a small minority of Palestinians in Gaza remain eligible for exit permits through the Israeli-controlled Erez crossing, primarily patients, businesspeople and the staff of international organizations. On average, in 2018, there were 9,566 exits per month from Gaza by permit holders through the Erez crossing, a 39 per cent increase compared with 2017. The average monthly number of referrals for Gaza patients in 2018, the majority of whom pass through Erez, was significantly higher than the monthly average for 2017, with 2,579 referrals per month in 2018, compared with 1,709 per month in 2017. Nevertheless, permit approval rates continue to decline, from 92.5 per cent in 2012 to 61 per cent in 2018.

21. The rate of approval of permit applications for United Nations national staff to leave Gaza was 62 per cent during 2018, up from 52 per cent in 2017. The total number of applications submitted in 2018 decreased by 20 per cent, however, owing primarily to the larger number of staff denied permits for security reasons and banned from reapplying for 12 months; that number is currently 137, compared with 41 staff at the end of 2017.

22. Kerem Shalom remained the almost exclusive crossing for the movement of commodities to and from Gaza, with some imports also allowed via the border with Egypt. On average, about 8,847 truckloads of goods entered Gaza per month in 2018, 11 per cent lower than the monthly average in the previous two years, while an average of 204 trucks exited Gaza per month, mostly to West Bank markets, nearly the same as in 2016–2017.

23. Between April 2018 and 31 March 2019, the Rafah crossing was open for a total of 250 days, a significant increase compared to the previous reporting period, when the crossing was open for 34 days. That is the highest number of open days since 2013, when the crossing was opened for 263 days. A total of 74,189 individuals exited to Egypt and 46,251 entered Gaza during the reporting period – 389 per cent more than in the previous reporting period, but less than in 2012 and 2013.

24. In January 2019, for the first time since 2005, Israel announced a partial expansion of the fishing limit, up to 12 nautical miles in the middle area off the Gaza coast, while access along the northern and southern areas continued to be restricted to 6 nautical miles. A further expansion up to 15 nautical miles was agreed to in March, effective 1 April 2019; that is the largest such expansion since 2000, despite it being less than the 20 nautical miles agreed under the Oslo Accords.

Barrier

25. The United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/17, continued its outreach and claim intake activities to “serve as a record, in documentary form, of the damage caused to all natural and legal persons concerned as a result of the construction of the wall by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem”. More than 68,700 claims and over 1.5 million supporting documents have been collected. Claim intake activities are completed in all nine governorates and in 265 of the 269 Palestinian communities affected by the construction of the wall.

III. United Nations response

A. Human and social development

26. During the reporting period, the United Nations continued to coordinate and deliver humanitarian and development assistance in the occupied Palestinian territory. A portion of that assistance targeted Palestinian individuals and communities in areas beyond the reach of the Palestinian Authority, including East Jerusalem and Area C, in the West Bank, and Gaza. The United Nations collectively sought to focus its efforts in the most vulnerable segments of the population.

Education

27. During the 2018/19 academic year, UNRWA provided free primary education (grades 1–9) to 278,938 students (143,973 boys and 134,965 girls) in 274 elementary and preparatory schools in Gaza and a further 46,310 students (27,658 girls and 18,652 boys) in 96 elementary and preparatory schools in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

28. In Gaza, to accommodate an expanding student body (7,091 students were added during the 2018/19 school year) and to reduce the number of facilities that operate on a double- and triple-shift basis, UNRWA undertook the construction or reconstruction of four schools, expanded three additional schools and commenced the design of three more schools.

29. UNRWA schools in the West Bank provided student support teams with training on inclusive education and disability inclusion. In addition, 240 teachers and 538 student family members were trained on positive discipline methods. One school in East Jerusalem was rehabilitated.

30. In Gaza, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported access to education through the reconstruction of four entirely damaged and 27 partially damaged schools and the rehabilitation of five vocational training centres and 21 university buildings.
31. UNDP improved access to safe and inclusive educational spaces for 8 educational facilities in Area C and East Jerusalem communities and provided grants to 84 schools in East Jerusalem.
32. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supported the introduction of life skills in schools. Following the training, more than 9,700 adolescents conducted 427 youth-led initiatives, such as social enterprises, which resulted in 10 start-ups and the mobilization of 86 private sector organizations.
33. UNICEF supported behaviour change initiatives in schools, focusing on violence-free schools through improved discipline practices, the reduction of bullying and the promotion of conflict resolution and non-violence.
34. The UNICEF remedial education programme helped students to overcome learning difficulties and catch up on missed education. In 2018, remedial education support reached 4,500 vulnerable children, of which 41 per cent were girls.
35. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) provided training for teachers on inclusive education and child-centred pedagogy to support the participation of all students in the teaching and learning process.
36. UNESCO developed a skills forecasting tool that supports youth in education and career decision-making processes, to increase their chances of employment.

Health

37. UNRWA continued to be a major provider of health-care services in the West Bank and Gaza. More than 4 million primary health-care patient consultations were provided during the reporting period. In Gaza, UNRWA provided primary health-care services through 22 health-care facilities and employed 933 personnel. In the West Bank, UNRWA operates 43 health-care facilities, including 24 primary health-care centres, 19 health points, one hospital and one non-communicable disease referral centre. Those facilities collectively employed 773 staff. Three health centres were rehabilitated in the West Bank during the reporting period. By the end of 2018, UNRWA had recorded an average of 82 visits per doctor per day in Gaza, and 76 in the West Bank. In addition, 25,440 Palestine refugees in the West Bank and a further 9,954 refugees in Gaza received health-care assistance.
38. In Gaza, the World Health Organization (WHO) worked in collaboration with a local university to introduce a diploma for general practitioners in primary health care. WHO also supported the establishment of the Palestinian National Institute of Public Health.
39. WHO worked with national partners to strengthen their capacity to prevent, manage and control non-communicable diseases. Through its primary health-care facilities, WHO implemented its Mental Health Gap Action Programme, training almost 1,600 staff members. The Programme supported the development of mental health emergency response plans in Gaza, including the establishment of six mental health emergency teams, the procurement of essential psychotropic drugs, infrastructure renovation at the Bethlehem psychiatric hospital and the establishment of mental health liaison units at seven general hospitals across the occupied Palestinian territory, including in East Jerusalem.

40. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supported a breast cancer project in the occupied Palestinian territory, which decreased the average time from diagnosis to commencement of treatment from six months to seven days. UNFPA provided a total of 4,845 mammograms, supported the Ministry of Health in updating breast cancer treatment protocols and reached more than 58,000 women through awareness-raising activities on breast self-examinations.

41. UNFPA supported sexual and reproductive health services through the training of 292 physicians and midwives on national obstetric care protocols, the provision of critical sexual and reproductive health equipment to health-care facilities and the development of two new e-learning courses for midwives.

42. The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) supported the establishment of the first Palestinian national rehabilitation centre in Bethlehem. The centre has supported the integration of drug treatment within the primary health-care system.

43. UNDP improved access to health-care services for 20,000 patients. Through UNDP support, the Yatta, Khalil Suleiman and Hebron hospitals have access to equipment and hospital space to increase the number of patients who can be given medical assistance. In Gaza, UNDP diversified the energy source for three hospitals through access to renewable energy.

44. In Jerusalem, UNDP supported the renovation of the oncology department at the Augusta Victoria Hospital. The East Jerusalem hospital network was provided with \$1.2 million to provide health care for patients in East Jerusalem not covered by the national health insurance scheme.

Water and sanitation

45. UNICEF supported improved access to safe drinking water for vulnerable communities in Gaza. During the reporting period, water, sanitation and hygiene interventions by UNICEF reached a total of 145,400 people: 133,200 in Gaza and 12,200 in the West Bank.

46. UNICEF supported the construction of the first phase of the southern Gaza desalination plant, benefiting 75,000 people. In addition, UNICEF supported the construction of a 0.5 MW solar power plant, providing additional electricity to the plant.

47. UNICEF rolled out a pilot project for a local desalination unit to benefit around 3,000 people in Khan Yunis governorate in Gaza.

48. In Area C, UNICEF supported the supply of water to vulnerable communities, in addition to working with the Palestinian Water Authority and partners to connect communities to water networks.

49. UNDP supported 3,885 households with improved access to wastewater services in the West Bank and increased municipal wastewater services in four communities in the Tulkarm district. UNDP supported farmers in Rafah with greater access to water, through the construction of 20 water ponds.

Employment

50. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) contributed to the creation of more than 890 temporary jobs through the rehabilitation of water-harvesting cisterns. Those cisterns will increase access to water for more than 500 herding families in the West Bank.

51. FAO supported 15 women's cooperatives in developing their businesses, reaching a combined total of 2,482 beneficiaries. Six women's cooperatives received training to enhance their skills in producing dried tomatoes and raisins.

52. UNDP contributed to the creation of 1,205 jobs across the occupied Palestinian territory and supported 226 small businesses in improving their business models. UNDP supported 40 projects in poverty-oriented infrastructure, which helped to generate 53,840 workdays in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, including 121 permanent jobs.

53. UNDP enabled 897 families to become more economically productive. One year after receiving the support, 70 per cent of households reported a tangible improvement in their overall livelihood conditions. UNDP supported 300 young people with improved access to career opportunities through skills training.

54. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) led the review of the Labour Law from a gender perspective. Draft amendments to seven articles of the Law were produced, in favour of women's economic empowerment, equal access to services and better work conditions.

55. ILO and UN-Women reached 2,100 women workers from the occupied Palestinian territory through awareness-raising activities on the inclusion of women in trade union. As a result, more than 1,000 women were registered with the unions.

56. The United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat) and UN-Women provided support to nine female architects to improve their income and skills through temporary job placements in three municipalities in Gaza.

Targeted social protection

57. UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) implemented an e-voucher programme to provide the most vulnerable families in Gaza with blankets, clothing and hygiene kits during the winter. Families received e-vouchers valued between \$47 and \$106. The programme provided 6,000 vulnerable families with water, sanitation and hygiene support, 3,400 families with child protection support and 2,000 children with education support.

58. UNICEF provided support to the Ministry of Social Development to improve its information management capacity for the national social protection system. As a result, the Ministry issued the first national statistical report of beneficiaries of various Ministry programmes.

59. UNRWA distributed 395,740 food parcels to 21,516 Palestine refugee households (98,935 individuals) in Gaza. A further 36,125 beneficiaries were assisted through cash-based transfers in the West Bank. In 2018, the percentage of Palestine refugees identified by UNRWA as abject poor reached 77.8 per cent in Gaza and 72 per cent in the West Bank.

60. WFP provided emergency food assistance and, through a cash-based transfer system, enabled partners to provide water, sanitation and hygiene items and school uniforms to the targeted population. WFP continued to support the Palestinian Government's social safety net programme, under which 163,000 people in Gaza and the West Bank received cash-based transfers during the reporting period.

Culture

61. UNESCO rehabilitated 10 cultural heritage sites in historic cities and rural localities, and 14 professionals were trained in cultural heritage preservation. The initiatives provided 20,000 working days as temporary job opportunities. UNESCO

supported the adoption of the Palestinian Government's first cultural heritage legislation, which entered into force on 3 June 2018.

62. UNDP supported the restoration of two cultural heritage sites in Nablus and Jericho.

Food security and agriculture

63. FAO and WFP provided technical support to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics to carry out the 2018 survey on socioeconomic food security.

64. In the West Bank, FAO provided 2,115 herders with 317 million tons of drought-tolerant seeds for fodder crops, allowing them to cultivate an additional 25,380 dunums of grazing land. That led to the production of fodder worth more than \$2.6 million. In addition, FAO supported nine farming cooperatives in the West Bank, through the introduction of 24 new crop varieties (9,000 fruit tree seedlings).

65. FAO facilitated access to 137 rainwater-harvesting cisterns in the West Bank for farmers and herders. More than 6,000 herding families can now access 115 community water cisterns. In addition, 22 cisterns were provided for supplementary irrigation for rain-fed grapes in the West Bank. The intervention had a specific gender focus; 22 per cent of the beneficiaries were women farmers.

66. FAO carried out a series of trainings to promote good agriculture practices. In all, 1,727 people received support, including technical exchange visits, while 1,300 people were trained on water management and conservation techniques.

67. UNDP supported the rehabilitation of 1,500 dunums of agricultural land and undertook construction on 2 km of road to support better access to farmland.

68. UNDP provided four mobile veterinary clinics, to improve farmers' access to animal care, and supported three agriculture research stations, to introduce more resilient plants.

Human rights, women, children and youth

69. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the occupied Palestinian territory supported the drafting and submission of reporting under international human rights treaties and undertook a wide range of capacity-building activities targeting the Palestinian Government, civil society and the national human rights institution.

70. UNDP, UN-Women and UNICEF continued to promote the rule of law in the occupied Palestinian territory through the provision of free and direct legal aid services to more than 10,316 individuals. UNDP enabled access to pro bono legal aid services for 10,205 people in Gaza and the West Bank.

71. UNDP helped 180 young people to access job opportunities through internships and provided 28 young people with scholarships. UNDP helped 8,237 young people to access recreational activities, and 300 young people benefited from capacity-building and career training in Gaza. In total, 24,000 young people were supported in their engagements to develop their local communities.

72. UNDP, UN-Women and UNICEF supported the Palestinian Cabinet's endorsement of the family protection bill.

73. UN-Women launched a communication campaign designed to target police officers through awareness-raising activities on the importance of the enrolment of women in the police force.

74. UN-Women provided a capacity-building programme for the justice and security sector service providers to increase knowledge in areas relating to violence against women, women's rights and gender equality.
75. UN-Women provided officials from four ministries and representatives of five civil society organizations with training on Islam and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
76. In Gaza, UN-Women supported 579 women, including 125 women who benefited from business skills training and skill-matching cash-for-work opportunities. In particular, 407 women were able to access protection-related services, including gender-based violence case management, psychosocial and legal counselling, awareness-raising and referrals, and 47 older women and women with disabilities were provided with physiotherapy and rehabilitation support.
77. UN-Habitat and UN-Women supported the participation of women and young people in reconstruction planning and implementation. In particular, 4,854 young people and adolescents from marginalized areas identified their specific needs and priorities in relation to public spaces and related services.
78. UN-Women delivered awareness-raising sessions on issues relating to gender equality to 3,338 fathers, 83 mothers, 996 male and 38 female university students, 3,383 male and 67 female elementary and preparatory school students, 40 male teachers and counsellors and 377 additional men.
79. UNESCO organized a series of training courses and open dialogues between journalists and members of Palestinian security forces, with a focus on freedom of expression and journalist safety.
80. UNFPA upgraded 20 health facilities to detect, treat and refer women and girls who are survivors of gender-based violence. Some 1,200 service providers were trained to provide medical, psychosocial and legal services for survivors of gender-based violence, and 6,000 women received medical, psychosocial and legal services in clinics and hospitals. In addition, 600 community sessions, attended by 3,000 women and men, were conducted by 250 community leaders who received training on sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence. UNFPA supported 250 survivors of gender-based violence through vocational training and small grants.
81. In Gaza, UNFPA supported more than 150 young people in initiating partnerships and dialogue with 460 community members, aimed at raising awareness of Security Council resolution 2250 on youth and peace and security. In total, UNFPA reached 14,100 young people with empowerment programmes.
82. UNICEF and its partners provided 7,000 children (including 3,700 females) with structured child protection interventions. Of those reached, more than 1,300 children received individual case management support.
83. UNICEF supported child protection sub-cluster actors to reach more than 2,100 children injured during the protests.
84. UNICEF supported a local NGO to train school counsellors in UNRWA schools to deliver awareness raising sessions to students on the legal rights of children when arrested or detained. UNICEF reached 2,000 of the most at-risk children with protection and prevention services, including both group and individual psychosocial support.
85. UNODC and UNRWA delivered a Training of Trainers to promote sports to prevent crime, violence and drug use and build resilience of at-risk youth to strengthen their life skills. By November 2018, 26 summer camp instructors and 60 sports school instructors received the training. UNODC delivered a training for 30

UNRWA counsellors and physical education instructors on crime prevention through sports.

86. UNRWA provided counselling services to 243 survivors (45 men and boys and 198 women and girls) of gender-based violence and child abuse and 351 survivors (257 men and 94 women) of elder neglect in the West Bank. Among those cases, 33 individuals received internal assistance. An additional 24 cases were referred for external legal, shelter, specialized health and/or social services. Furthermore, 46 emergency cases received immediate assistance and 1,402 individuals received group counselling services.

87. In Gaza, UNRWA provided mental health and psychosocial support to vulnerable adults and children through its education and health programmes. In addition, psychosocial assistance was extended to support 1,475 adult survivors of gender-based violence (1,214 individually and 261 through group counselling). Of those cases, 906 were referred to legal counsellors who provided guidance on issues relating to women's rights, separation and divorce, custody and personal property. Awareness-raising sessions delivered by legal counsellors reached an additional 2,733 beneficiaries, while community awareness and prevention activities relating to gender-based violence, domestic violence, neglect and sexual abuse reached a further 2,272 Palestine refugees. The Young Women Leaders programme provided 173 female university graduates with leadership, life-skills and self-development training. In all, 160 Programme graduates participated in a five-month work placement programme in different organizations and companies across Gaza.

Environment, housing and urban development

88. UN-Habitat supported spatial planning projects in three marginalized municipalities in Gaza benefitting more than 15,000 residents.

89. UN-Habitat and UN-Women inaugurated safe and inclusive public spaces in two municipalities in Gaza, developed using technology to engage women and young people in designing public spaces. Together, the two public spaces serve more than 130,000 community members.

90. UN-Habitat delivered spatial planning support in partnership with over 20 local implementing partners, targeting more than 1.5 million Palestinians in more than 200 communities across the West Bank.

91. Through UNDP support, 200 vulnerable families benefited from improved access to adequate, safe and affordable housing in East Jerusalem.

92. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) supported the installation of rooftop solar systems in 188 vulnerable households in Gaza, enabling access to a clean and sustainable source of electricity.

B. United Nations system emergency assistance

93. Since 30 March 2018, Palestinian injuries in Gaza have increased significantly owing to the "Great March of Return" protests and, to a lesser extent, other incidents. To respond to this crisis, humanitarian agencies have prioritized three areas of intervention: emergency health care; protection monitoring; and mental health and psychosocial support.

94. As from February 2019, more than 2,200 families (about 12,300 individuals) whose homes were destroyed during the 2014 escalation of hostilities remain internally displaced in Gaza, owing mainly to a lack of funding and limited access to basic construction materials. An urgent gap in assistance remains for around 1,600

internally displaced families who require cash support to secure adequate accommodation. Many of those families are among the poorest and are routinely vulnerable to forced eviction owing to their inability to pay their rent, for which they depend on transitional shelter cash assistance.

95. The United Nations Mine Action Service carried out 78 risk assessments, covering 674,062 m² of land and 52 km of roads. Those assessments enabled the implementation of recovery projects valued at \$70 million, including the reconstruction and refurbishment of roads, water supply and sewage treatment systems, sports facilities and schools.

Emergency agriculture support

96. FAO rehabilitated seven groundwater wells to improve pumping efficiency and extraction management. Water supplied by those wells is currently managed by three water user committees established and capacitated with support from FAO. In addition, FAO supported the establishment of 10 water user committees to manage water usage in the Jordan valley. More than 3,800 people (810 households) benefited from 61 km of water irrigation conveyance systems that were rehabilitated to reduce leakage.

97. In Gaza, FAO distributed mite treatments to 278 beekeepers to protect 15,000 beehives from an infestation of varroosis.

Emergency food support

98. UNICEF provided screening for malnutrition for more than 18,700 children under the age of 5 in Gaza. Of those screened, 237 children were found to be suffering from severe acute malnutrition and 2,700 were found to be suffering from moderate acute malnutrition. All those found suffering from malnutrition were referred for treatment.

99. UNRWA distributed emergency food parcels to 955,120 individuals, a stark increase compared with the 80,000 persons reliant on food assistance in 2000.

100. In 2018, UNRWA and WFP provided in-kind food assistance to more than 37,000 members of Bedouin herder communities. A further 7,843 food-insecure refugee households (45,887 individuals) residing outside the 19 refugee camps in the West Bank were provided with electronic food vouchers.

101. In the West Bank, UNRWA completed a full reassessment of its emergency caseload located outside of camps, which resulted in the identification of refugee households living beneath the abject poverty line. In the first quarter of 2019, a total of 3,620 refugee households were supported with emergency cash assistance.

102. In Gaza, WFP provided 208,000 food-insecure non-refugee Palestinians with cash-based transfers and 35,000 non-refugee Palestinians with in-kind food parcels.

103. In the West Bank, WFP provided food assistance to 74,000 food-insecure non-refugee Palestinians through cash-based transfers and provided 37,000 non-refugee Palestinians with in-kind food parcels.

Emergency education support

104. UNICEF facilitated access to education for approximately 5,000 students and teachers in the West Bank, where students and teachers face access restrictions owing to checkpoints and road closures. UNICEF provided psychosocial support for teachers and students to mitigate the effects of conflict-related violence.

105. UNICEF distributed more than 14,000 emergency education supply kits for vulnerable students in Gaza and facilitated emergency fuel delivery to operate generators in schools and correction centres in Gaza for the administration of the general secondary education certificate examination (*tawjihi*).

106. The Mine Action Service provided risk education on explosive remnants of war to 3,549 at-risk persons in Gaza, including 2,542 children, and implemented community-based resilience training focused on the empowerment of women. The training reached 8,305 participants, including 7,084 women. In 2018, there were nine victims of explosive remnants of war, including four children. The Service provided support to meet the explosive ordnance disposal requirements of all United Nations-affiliated school facilities in Gaza.

Emergency health support

107. UNFPA contributed to the strengthening and preparedness of the health-care system to respond to sexual and reproductive health needs through the training of 50 health-care providers. UNFPA provided and distributed 60 safe delivery kits to support safe emergency births in Gaza. UNFPA trained 75 health-care professionals on the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health in humanitarian settings.

108. UNICEF supported the provision of essential emergency health-care supplies to ensure access to essential life-saving health and nutrition services for women with high-risk pregnancies, lactating women and newborn and young children in Gaza.

109. UNICEF improved postnatal home visit services for more than 6,600 newborn children and their mothers, contributing to a 75 per cent reduction in complicated cases and referrals to hospitals.

110. In 2018, UNRWA school counsellors provided individual counselling to 9,350 at-risk children (5,230 boys and 4,120 girls) and structured group counselling to 10,808 children (5,061 boys and 5,747 girls) attending schools in Gaza. In addition, counsellors in UNRWA health centres provided psychosocial and protection interventions to 5,915 clients (952 men and 4,963 women), primarily in the form of individual and group counselling (2,835 were supported individually and 3,080 through group counselling). Of the 5,915 clients, 906 benefited from referrals to legal aid.

111. In the West Bank, the UNRWA emergency health programme supported six mobile health clinics operating in 50 communities facing significant obstacles in accessing health services. Those clinics served a catchment population of 130,351 individuals and delivered 78,762 patient consultations during the reporting period.

112. UNRWA provided mental health and psychosocial support to 46 Bedouin and herder communities in the West Bank, including in the East Jerusalem periphery.

113. WHO procured essential medical supplies and drugs to address critical shortages in the health sector, with a focus on Gaza.

114. WHO provided support to the Ministry of Health and partners to set up and strengthen a trauma management system in Gaza. WHO contributed equipment and technical support for trauma stabilization points close to the Gaza fence, which provide triage and life-saving initial treatment to reduce the strain on hospital services. To assist health services in coping with the massive burden of limb injuries, WHO worked with partners to expand limb reconstruction and patient rehabilitation services. WHO helped to equip hospitals with alternative energy sources, including solar energy.

Emergency housing support

115. Under the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, UNOPS supported the import of reconstruction materials to Gaza. In 2018, around 326,600 tons of cement were imported. Project materials went to building or preparing for the rebuilding of homes for 7,848 Gazan families. The project used local suppliers, helping to boost the local economy.

116. UNOPS completed the first phase of the reconstruction of destroyed houses in Gaza, benefiting 155 families. Another 566 families will be targeted for the second phase.

117. Between the end of the 2014 hostilities and February 2019, UNRWA assistance has allowed more than 85,326 families to complete the repair of their homes, while more than 4,163 families have completed or were in the process of rebuilding their entirely destroyed homes.

118. UNRWA provided cash assistance to 58 Palestine refugee families (303 individuals) following home demolitions carried out by the Israeli authorities. In addition, 484 Palestine refugee families (653 individuals) received cash assistance and referrals to meet humanitarian needs caused by search-and-arrest operations carried out by the Israeli security forces in Palestine refugee camps that led to damaged homes and emotional trauma.

119. UNDP supported the rehabilitation of 55 partially damaged houses in Rafah and rebuilt 203 totally damaged houses.

Emergency income generation

120. During the reporting period, UNRWA employed 13,776 area personnel to manage and implement its operations throughout Gaza.

121. In 2018, UNRWA facilitated short-term employment for 10,139 individuals. The total number of jobs created was equal to approximately 690,000 working days and collectively injected some \$8 million into the local economy in Gaza. In addition, UNRWA spent \$60.9 million in 2018 on construction projects and self-help shelter repair and reconstruction initiatives, generating the equivalent of 3,125 full-time jobs. The Sulafa Embroidery Centre provided a further 306 women with income generation opportunities.

122. In 2018, UNRWA provided emergency assistance through the provision of cash-for-work opportunities to 5,913 households (indirectly benefiting 32,944 individuals) in 19 refugee camps in the West Bank. From August through December 2018, 7,338 individuals, assessed as abject poor, were provided with emergency cash assistance.

123. UNDP provided \$11 million in short-term financial support to address the urgent needs of the people of Gaza.

Emergency water and sanitation support

124. In 2018, UNICEF supported improved access to sustainable and at-scale sanitation services, wastewater networks and flood prevention systems, reaching 28,000 people. In Gaza, UNICEF, together with the Palestinian Water Authority, finalized the construction of a detention basin and overflow line in Rafah, which significantly reduced the annual flood risk for 20,000 people. To help families to reduce the spread of waterborne diseases, UNICEF provided 15,900 vulnerable households with family hygiene kits.

125. UNRWA continued to support the functioning of water wells, desalination plants, wastewater treatment and waste management services in Gaza, through the

provision of 3.1 million litres of fuel to 9 UNRWA installations and 169 non-UNRWA facilities.

126. In 2018, UNRWA provided solid waste management services in 8 Palestine refugee camps in Gaza, where approximately 560,000 Palestine refugees reside, and in 19 camps in the West Bank, where some 256,000 reside.

C. United Nations system support to Palestinian institutions

127. FAO and ILO delivered a training-of-trainers course to 23 participants from the new Cooperative Works Agency, the Ministry of Agriculture, cooperative unions and other groups providing services to cooperatives, to train 40 agricultural and women cooperatives in the West Bank.

128. OHCHR provided technical assistance to the Palestinian Government in the preparation of State party reports to human rights treaty bodies and in preparation for the constructive dialogue with the treaty bodies. Furthermore, OHCHR provided institution-building support to the Palestinian Government, in particular in relation to the set-up of its national preventive mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

129. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development provided advisory services to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, covering econometric modelling of the Palestinian economy with the goal of assessing alternative policy options and forecasting key socioeconomic variables.

130. UNFPA provided support to the Ministry of Health to develop a national sexual and reproductive health strategy for the 2018–2022 period and to strengthen the gender-based violence referral system. UNFPA also supported the Ministry in developing an advocacy strategy with an action plan on the clinical management of rape, which was followed by capacity-building for 78 health and psychosocial professionals of the Ministry.

131. UN-Habitat supported municipalities in the practice of participatory planning processes, through the development of a manual for participatory spatial planning in Gaza.

132. As a result of the UNICEF-supported pilot project for early childhood development services, an estimated 3.8 per cent of families that have young children with developmental delays and disabilities were reached and supported at facilities in three districts in the West Bank and five facilities in Gaza.

133. UNICEF supported a shift towards more learner-centred approaches and effective integration of life skills in schools, through a programme that trained 540 teachers, 105 supervisors and 100 principals in 100 schools across the occupied Palestinian territory.

134. UNICEF supported mainstreaming education in emergencies, through improved information management on incidents affecting education and the completion of the first national contingency plan for the education sector.

135. UNODC supported the forensic science laboratory within the Palestinian Civil Police and supported forensic doctors in obtaining higher specialty degrees in forensics at the University of Jordan. In 2018, one doctor completed his studies and five received training on sexual and gender-based violence.

136. UNOPS provided technical assistance to the High Judicial Council for the establishment of a new functional general directorate for facilities management. That support was aimed at strengthening Council capacity and governance in developing and maintaining its facilities.

137. UNOPS supported the Public Prosecution office, which is the office of the Attorney General, by refurbishing, furnishing and equipping rooms for women and children in seven prosecution facilities in the West Bank.

138. UNOPS supported the Palestinian Authority security forces by equipping its regional maintenance facilities, thus strengthening its capacity to perform routine, comprehensive and emergency maintenance of its fleet of vehicles.

D. Private sector development

139. UNRWA extended 2,687 loans to Palestine refugees in Gaza during the reporting period, a decline of 35.6 per cent compared with the previous year. Those loans were valued at \$3.36 million, a decline of 53.4 per cent compared with the previous year. In the West Bank, 9,784 loans, valued at \$13.86 million, were disbursed during the reporting period, with Palestine refugees receiving 2,410 loans valued at \$3.20 million. Women received 42 per cent of all loans, while young people (aged 18–30 years) received 40 per cent.

140. UNDP completed the rehabilitation and consolidation of the Gaza Industrial Estate, targeting 2,000 labourers, including 30 women.

E. Coordination of United Nations assistance

141. Under the auspices of the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, collaboration and coordination between the numerous donor and United Nations forums continued during the reporting period. The humanitarian country team met regularly to agree on humanitarian advocacy and response measures. The United Nations country team continued to coordinate its development programming, in alignment with the priorities of the Palestinian National Policy Agenda for 2017–2022.

IV. Donor response to the crisis

Budgetary and fiscal support

142. In 2018, the overall budget deficit (before financing) of the Palestinian Authority increased to 12 per cent of GDP. To finance the deficit, the Palestinian Authority relied on donor support and financing from national banks. During the year, donors provided the Palestinian Authority with approximately \$515 million in budgetary support and an additional \$158 million in development finance.

143. During the year, donor support to the occupied Palestinian territory declined sharply owing to a decision by the United States of America to withdraw support to UNRWA and divert a significant portion of the programme budget of the United States Agency for International Development elsewhere.

Donor coordination

144. The reformed local aid coordination structure, which went into effect during the previous reporting period, continued to function as the main forum for the Palestinian

Government-led coordination of donor-funded development interventions in 15 sectors.

145. During the reporting period, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee held one regular meeting, on 27 September 2018 in New York, which resulted in an agreement on a package of urgent humanitarian and economic interventions for Gaza, including projects to alleviate the energy crisis, provide emergency health care, support water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and improve the economic situation. The projects had a total price tag of \$210 million over a period of six months, of which nearly \$113 million was received. Funding received to date has enabled UNOPS to procure and deliver fuel to the Gaza power plant, increasing electricity supply in Gaza from about 4 to 5 hours per day to 12 to 15 hours per day. It has also enabled the delivery of essential medicines and the performance of thousands of emergency surgeries. Funds mobilized have created thousands of temporary jobs in both the public and private sectors in Gaza. In addition, the United Nations has enhanced its presence on the ground in Gaza to facilitate the smooth implementation of projects, in coordination with the Palestinian Authority and international stakeholders, through the establishment of a Project Management Unit.

V. Unmet needs

146. Under the Humanitarian Response Plan for the occupied Palestinian territory for 2019, \$350 million is sought to fund assistance and protection for the 1.4 million vulnerable Palestinians identified as being most in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. That significant reduction compared with the Plan for 2018 reflects an attempt to prioritize the most urgent needs in the face of record-low funding levels: only 46 per cent of the funding for the 2018 Plan was secured, significantly lower than the global average of nearly 60 per cent for all humanitarian response plans worldwide. The shortfall reflects a trend of reduced funding for humanitarian agencies across the occupied Palestinian territory.

147. In 2018, UNRWA experienced the greatest financial challenge in its history. Following the January 2018 announcement by the United States that it would withhold its contribution in 2018, the projected programme shortfall stood at \$446 million. That shortfall affected the Agency's emergency operations throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, forcing it to take mitigating measures and implement changes to some of its emergency interventions. To avoid interruptions in the provision of critical humanitarian assistance, other interventions had to be scaled back or discontinued during the second half of the year, including, in Gaza, the community mental health and job-creation programmes, as well as rental subsidies to families made homeless because of the 2014 hostilities; and, in the West Bank, the cash-for-work, community mental health and mobile health clinic interventions. Protection capacities were reduced and adjusted to accommodate a constrained budget. In January 2019, UNRWA announced an annual budget of \$1.2 billion to fund the Agency's core services and humanitarian assistance for 5.4 million Palestine refugees. That is the amount needed to keep UNRWA operations at the same level as they were in 2018.

VI. Challenges

148. The absence of a political process aimed at ending the occupation and achieving a viable two-State solution continues to be the largest impediment to Palestinian development. Continued Israeli settlement expansion, demolitions, closures, access and movement restrictions and other aspects of the military occupation continue to

have a severe impact on the humanitarian, social and political life of Palestinians and their ability to exercise their fundamental human rights. Violence and incitement continue to perpetuate mutual fear and suspicion. The political division between the West Bank and Gaza places severe obstacles to addressing humanitarian needs and restoring a political horizon. Decreased funding to the State of Palestine, and to the United Nations, during the reporting period poses a further challenge to the provision of development and humanitarian assistance.

VII. Conclusions

149. The operational context for the work of the United Nations in the reporting period was increasingly difficult as a result of the challenges outlined in the present report. The United Nations will continue to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [1397 \(2002\)](#), [1515 \(2003\)](#), [1850 \(2008\)](#), [1860 \(2009\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#), an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel. It is only by realizing the vision of two States living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and Palestine, and all final status issues resolved permanently through negotiations, that the legitimate aspirations of both peoples will be achieved.
