STATEMENT BY

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OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

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Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, let me thank again all the delegations, and you personally, Mr. President for your active participation in the Solidarity Day Special Meeting this morning. 66 years ago the General Assembly proclaimed two States, only one of which came into being. But it was not until 29 November 2012, that the General Assembly awarded to Palestine the recognition as an Observer State. Our Committee strongly supported this recognition, which we believed would help revitalise the peace process. This view was borne out by events, which means we are on the right track, as symbolically illustrated by the first vote of the State of Palestine in the General Assembly last Monday, 18 November. It is our fervent wish that by next year we would be welcoming President Mahmoud Abbas as a leader of a sovereign and independent Member State to the United Nations.

The various parties whose tenacious engagement moved the peace process forward deserve enormous credit, including the United States, the Arab League, Jordan, the EU, the Quartet and the Secretary-General. There are worrying signs however that the process is undergoing a deep crisis of confidence mainly due to the acceleration of illegal settlement activities, which caused a resignation of the Palestinian negotiating team in protest. It is our view that the General Assembly as a guarantor of international legitimacy, has an important role to play in the critical year ahead to maintain the integrity of this process. The four draft resolutions, which I would now like to introduce to the Assembly under this agenda item, incorporate our thinking in this regard.

During the past year, our Committee has been working hard to build on the momentum generated by resolution 67/19. We analysed the various implications of the new political reality of a State under occupation thus created, which present new opportunities.

The first three drafts are related to the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, and the Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information. They reaffirm the important mandates entrusted to these entities by the General Assembly. As in the past, the Committee intends to make sure that resources available to it are employed in a cost-effective manner. These drafts have been
extensively consulted with regional groups and approved by the Committee, and circulated as documents A/68/L.12, A/68/L.13, and A/68/L.14 before you.

There are some new elements there which I will clarify. Over the years, the United Nations has declared International Years dedicated to raising awareness about a variety of issues particularly important to the international community. However, there has never been a year dedicated to the question of Palestine, one of the oldest pending issues on the United Nations agenda, still unresolved despite the decades of efforts. Our Committee wanted to correct this historical imbalance. This is why the draft resolution in document L.12 proclaims 2014 the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and requests the Committee to organize activities in cooperation with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society.

We chose 2014, to focus the attention of the international community on the issue and to give it an opportunity to make a positive contribution in support of the peace process currently unfolding. In the spirit of budgetary discipline, and fully aware of the financial constraints facing the United Nations, it is important to note that we will not be requesting additional regular budget resources. We will be appealing to all supporters of the Palestinian cause to contribute generous extra-budgetary funds to this initiative. Please bear in mind that the International Years are not just for the United Nations. Governments, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society traditionally launch the bulk of the activities in connection with International Years. Examples can include conferences, forums, youth camps, exhibitions, competitions, briefings, rallies, petitions, concerts, film screenings, workshops, festivals, online events and more. We will be seeking your input and sharing our ideas in the months ahead in order to shape and coordinate this major effort.

I encourage you to co-sponsor these resolutions. The fourth draft entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,” contained in document A/68/L.15 reiterates the position of the General Assembly with regard to the essential elements of such a settlement and includes references to the developments of the past year. It welcomes the resumption of negotiations on all permanent status issues within the 9-month time frame. It also encourages all States and intergovernmental organizations to pursue policies that ensure respect for their obligations under international law, in particular with regard to settlements. I hope these and other provisions of the text will meet your strong support.

The four draft resolutions, that I have just introduced, outline positions, mandates, and programmes that are of special importance, particularly at the present crucial juncture. Our Committee is fully committed to the cause of Israeli-Palestinian peace. A vote in favour of these four drafts would be sure to be a vote for peace.

Thank you.

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