United Nations
General Assembly – 69th Session
24 November 2014

Agenda Item 36:
Question of Palestine

Statement delivered by
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Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

Mr. President,

The EU has fully supported US-led peace efforts and underlines that these efforts must not go to waste. We are convinced that the regional context and the situation in Gaza make a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict more necessary than ever. We urge the parties to resume meaningful negotiations with the aim of achieving a comprehensive peace agreement based on a two-state solution. The only way to resolve the conflict is through an agreement that ends the occupation which began in 1967, that ends all claims and that fulfills the aspirations of both parties. A one state reality would not be compatible with these aspirations.

The EU recalls that a lasting solution to the conflict must be achieved on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, the Madrid principles including land for peace, the Roadmap, the agreements previously reached by the parties and of the Arab Peace Initiative, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security and mutual recognition. We believe that clear parameters defining the basis for negotiations are key elements for a successful outcome. The EU has set out and will continue to actively promote its position with regard to parameters in Council Conclusions of December 2009 and December 2010, and as expressed by the EU in the UN Security Council on 21 April 2011. On this basis, the EU is

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
willing to work with the US and other partners on an initiative to relaunch the peace negotiations, based on the following parameters:

- An agreement on the borders of the two states, based on 4 June 1967 lines with equivalent land swaps as may be agreed between the parties. The EU will recognize changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, only when agreed by the parties.
- Security arrangements that, for Palestinians, respect their sovereignty and show that the occupation is over; and, for Israelis, protect their security, prevent the resurgence of terrorism and deal effectively with security threats, including with new and vital threats in the region.
- A just, fair, agreed and realistic solution to the refugee question.
- Fulfilment of the aspirations of both parties for Jerusalem. A way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both states.

Mr. President,

The preservation of the viability of the two-state solution must remain a priority. The developments on the ground make the prospect of a two-state solution increasingly unattainable. Reaffirming its commitment to implement the EU Council Conclusions of May and December 2012 as well as the applicability of international human rights and humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territory, the EU calls on Israel to halt continued settlement expansion, which severely threatens the two state solution; to put an end to settler violence, to the worsening of living conditions for Palestinians in Area C, to demolitions - including of EU funded projects - to evictions and to forced transfers. A fundamental change of policy on these negative developments is necessary to prevent the irreversible loss of the two state solution.

The EU is also gravely concerned at the growing tension and increasing violence on the ground. We condemn all recent terrorist attacks and express our condolences for the loss of life. We urge all parties to refrain from any action that would worsen the situation by way of incitement, provocation, excessive use of force or retaliation. The EU calls on political leaders from all sides to work together through visible actions to de-escalate the situation. In this regard, we are particularly concerned at worrying developments and recurrent violent clashes at the Haram al-Sharif / Temple Mount. We appeal for full respect of the Holy Sites. Any change of the status quo would have deeply destabilizing effects. The EU fully acknowledges the role of Jordan as Custodian to the Muslim Holy Shrines in Jerusalem and welcomes the tripartite meeting in Amman on 13 November between King Abdullah, Secretary of State John Kerry and Prime Minister Netanyahu where concrete steps towards a calming down of the situation were agreed upon. We look forward to a swift and effective implementation of such measures.

Actions which call into question stated commitments to a negotiated solution must be avoided. The EU deeply deplores and strongly opposes the recent expropriation of land near Bethlehem, recent announcements of plans for new settlement construction, in particular in Givat Hamatos, Ramat Shlomo, Har Homa and Ramot, as well as plans to displace Bedouins in the West Bank and the continued demolitions, including of EU and Member States funded projects. We urge Israel to reverse these decisions which run counter to international law and directly threaten the two state solution. Recent settlement activity in East Jerusalem seriously jeopardizes the possibility of Jerusalem serving as the future capital of both states. Recalling that settlements are illegal under international law, the EU and its Member States remain committed to ensure continued, full and effective implementation of existing EU legislation and bilateral arrangements applicable to settlement products. We closely monitor the situation and its broader implications and remain ready to take further action in order to protect the viability of the two state solution.
Mr. President,

The EU underlines its concern at the dire humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, which still remains to be adequately addressed, by urgently restoring basic infrastructures and services. We welcome the international community pledges towards the reconstruction of Gaza. In light of the urgent needs of the people in Gaza, all these pledges should be swiftly honoured. The EU urges the parties to fully implement the temporary mechanism for monitoring and verification of reconstruction materials negotiated by the United Nations, Israel and the Palestinian Authority, as an important step towards the necessary urgent opening of all crossing points. Whilst taking positive note of the recent one-off transfers of agricultural products and fish from Gaza to the West Bank, the EU stresses the importance of a change of the Israeli policy, allowing Gaza to trade normally and on a permanent basis.

The EU calls for a fundamental change of the political, security and economic situation in the Gaza Strip, including the end of the closure. The parties should urgently make progress towards a durable ceasefire, based on their agreement in Cairo on 26 August, to reach an agreement that ends the Gaza closure and addresses Israel’s legitimate security concerns. A return to the status quo prior to the latest conflict is not an option. The EU stands ready to play a key role in international efforts to support a durable ceasefire, including through the rapid reactivation and possible extension in scope and mandate of its EUBAM Rafah and EUPOL COPPS missions. We urge all the relevant parties to create the conditions to allow it to play such a role.

The EU supports the efforts of the Palestinian national consensus government and President Abbas and strongly encourages the Palestinian Authority to progressively assume its government function in the Gaza Strip, including in the field of security, civil administration and through its presence at the Gaza crossing points. We welcome the convening of the first cabinet meeting in Gaza as a positive step and urge all Palestinian factions to end internal divisions. We are concerned by the recent bomb attacks against leading Fatah figures in Gaza.

The unsustainable situation in Gaza, the recent increase of violence in Jerusalem, and the deteriorating regional context underline the need for a comprehensive peace, ending all claims and fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of both parties, including those of Israelis for security and those of Palestinians for statehood. The EU welcomes Secretary of State Kerry’s renewed efforts to help the parties return to the table and calls on the parties and on all major stakeholders, including the Quartet, the League of Arab States and the UN Security Council, to take the necessary steps to that end. In this regard, the EU reaffirms its strategic interest to see an end to the conflict and is willing to play a major role and actively contribute to a negotiated solution of all final status issues.

Mr. President,

The EU will do all it can to support the achievement of a lasting and just solution to the conflict. In this regard, the EU reiterates its offer to both parties of a package of European political, economic and security support and of a Special Privileged Partnership with the EU in the event of a final peace agreement. The EU is convinced that this support and partnership, by anchoring both the State of Israel and a future State of Palestine in an ever closer relationship with Europe, will provide a strategic framework for their stable, secure and prosperous development.

Thank you Mr. President.