

Intervention made by Shri Navtej Sarna, AS (IO) at the Ministerial Meeting of the NAM
Committee on Palestine on September 26, 2013

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished members of the Committee,

Allow me at the outset, Mr. Chairman, to thank you for organizing this meeting.

2. NAM has a long history of solidarity with the Palestinian people. India as the founding member of the Movement has always supported the cause of the Palestinian people. Our support for their just cause is time tested and a cornerstone of India's foreign policy. India continues to remain steadfast and unwavering in its commitment to the cause for a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine living within secure and recognized borders with East Jerusalem as its Capital, side by side and at peace with Israel as endorsed in the Quartet Roadmap, various UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

3. As a member of the Security Council during 2011-12, India not only supported Palestine's bid for full membership of the United Nations, it co-sponsored the General Assembly resolution in November 2012 that upgraded the status of Palestine to a non-member Observer State. India will continue its full support for Palestine to become a Member-State of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The biggest obstacle to the realization of an independent, sovereign Palestinian state is Israeli settlement activity. This activity is mortally undermining the premise of a two-state solution. India, therefore, opposes Israeli settlement policy, voted in favour of the draft resolution in the Security Council in February 2011 and continues to call for total cessation of all settlement activities.

5. The blockade of Gaza has had serious consequences for the lives of Palestinians. It has adversely affected essential services, economic activities and infrastructure development. We continue to hold that it is necessary for Israel to lift the blockade on Gaza and allow normal and unrestricted movement of persons and goods within Palestine.

6. We are also alarmed at the continuing violence and disproportionate and excessive use of force by the Israeli authorities. We deplore these measures and the loss of lives and property that they cause in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Given the evolving situation in the region and its inherent fragility and unpredictability, it is necessary that there is no more delay in the resolution of the Palestinian question. We are encouraged by the resumption of direct talks between Israel and Palestine (facilitated by US efforts). We hope that the direct talks after

perhaps one of the longest period of stalemate since the signing of the Oslo Accords will lead to concrete results.

8. India stands ready to support all measures that the Palestinian leadership will take towards political resolution of the Final Status issues so that an independent, sovereign Palestinian State comes into being.

9. Meanwhile, we will continue to provide developmental support and assistance to the Palestinian Authority through direct budgetary support, contributions to UNRWA and bilateral capacity building and infrastructure projects as well as through IBSA fund.

10. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we think NAM has an important role to play in supporting the Palestinian leadership in their efforts towards realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People. As our Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said during the last NAM Summit in Tehran, “we should renew our pledge to support an early resolution of the Palestinian question, so that the long suffering people of Palestine can live in peace and dignity in a state of their own.”

11. We are hopeful that today’s meeting will send a strong signal to all concerned of our collective support for the Palestinian people and their leadership in their endeavours to resolve this long-standing question.

I thank you.

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