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STATEMENT

BY

**PENDAPALA NAANDA
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AT

**THE SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON
"THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST,
INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION"**

**NEW YORK
20 JANUARY 2014**

Mr. President,

I wish to congratulate you on your country's election to the Security Council for the period 2014 to 2015, and for the assumption of the Presidency of the Council for the month of January 2014. Equally, I wish to thank you for organizing this first 2014 open debate on the Middle East, which affords the wider UN membership an opportunity to participate in these important deliberations. As 2014 is the declared year of solidarity with the Palestinian People, we look forward to participating in similar fora that aims to resolve the fragile security situation in the Middle East, in particular the Question of Palestine.

At the same time, I wish to congratulate the newly elected members of the Security Council, and extend my delegation's support to them during their tenure to this august body.

My delegation aligns itself with the Statement going to be delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. President,

We remain convinced that the main political problem in the Middle East, is the systematic aggression by Israel against Palestine, which continues to pose a threat to peace and security in the region. Namibia remains concerned about the critical situation, and the continued illegal Israeli settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which continues to gravely undermine the integrity of the State of Palestine, and threatening to make impossible, the achievement of the two-State solution, for peace on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

Of great concern to my delegation, is the increasing number of Israeli settlements, which is based on an illegal colonizing policy that has resulted in the blockade of the Gaza strip, restricted access for much needed goods, humanitarian aid, medical supplies and fuel. The sustained Israeli occupation severely affects the socio-economic wellbeing of the Palestinians, which is a flagrant denial of their right to self determination, and exercise of their fundamental human rights, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Namibia believes that Israel's continuing flagrant contempt of international law demands urgent attention and responsible action by the international community, aimed at compelling the occupying Power to end all such grave breaches and at salvaging the prospects for a peaceful solution in the Middle East region.

Mr. President,

As a country that has undergone similar illegal occupation by the South Africa apartheid regime, Namibia continues to persistently extend its steadfast support for the Palestinian people in pursuit for their inalienable right to self-determination, independence and freedom, and will remain committed to this noble course.

In this context, Namibia welcomes the proclamation by the General Assembly for the year 2014 as the **International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**, in accordance with the General Assembly resolution 68/12 of 26 November 2013. We are hopeful that the observance of this year as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People will bring an end to the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories and the achievement of the independence of the State of Palestine with full sovereignty and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. President,

We wish to remind this Council of its obligations to the just course of the People of Palestine, by adopting practical measures to end Israeli abuses and illegal policies against the Palestinian people. It is

incomprehensible that the Question of Palestine remains a permanent agenda item on the Council's work program, considering that the General Assembly, the most representative organ of the UN, adopted a historic decision in 2012 by according Palestine Non-Member Observer State status to Palestine in the United Nations.

We remain hopeful that this constitutes an important step towards the eventual accession of Palestine to the United Nations as a full Member State. It is therefore important for this Council to respect the wish of the international community by considering and approving without any further delay, the request made by Palestine for recognition as a fully fledged UN Member State, taking its rightful place amongst the community of nations.

Mr. President,

Namibia continues to believe that a real and lasting **solution** to the freedom of Palestine, can only be realized through the implementation of all relevant resolutions of the United Nations, regarding the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and that, peace in the middle-East can only be achieved by addressing the illegal occupation of the Palestinian Territory by Israel, the creation of the Palestinian State, ending all conflicts, and bringing

lasting peace and security, to both Palestinians and Israelis, and the wider region.

Let me reiterate Namibia's strong support to the ongoing peace process, and our appeal to both parties to commit themselves, and to embrace this opportunity, and abide by their previous agreements and obligations for lasting peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians, living side-by-side.

Let me conclude by further reiterating Namibia's unwavering support and solidarity with the people of Palestine in their just cause for freedom, independence and social justice, and Namibia's steadfast support for the full membership of Palestine to the United Nations, and its specialized agencies.

I thank you.