



**PERMANENT MISSION OF TURKEY TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**STATEMENT BY**  
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**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY**  
**TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT THE 60<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**ON AGENDA ITEM 14, ENTITLED**  
**“THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST”**

**NEW YORK, 30 NOVEMBER 2005**

Mr. President,

Turkey has aligned itself with the statements made by the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union under the agenda items 14 and 15, entitled "The situation in the Middle East" and the "Question of Palestine", respectively. I therefore wish to further elaborate on a number of issues which we deem important at this critical juncture.

Mr. President,

The withdrawal of Israel from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank is indeed an encouraging development in the region. The recent agreement between the parties on Rafah border crossing in the Gaza Strip is also an important achievement, thus strengthening the expectations for a constructive environment to take hold in the region. The prospect for the resumption of the peace process within the framework of the Road Map has now emerged. In this context, we would like to praise Quartet Special Representative Mr. James Wolfensohn, for his tireless efforts in devising a crucial reconstruction plan for the revival of the Palestinian economy.

It is our ardent view, Mr. President, that for the attainment of the long-awaited peace, security, socio-economic development and progress in the Middle East, the settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is essential. The international community and, in particular, the Quartet have a crucial role to play to get the derailed peace process back on track. We must assist the two sides to seize the current window of opportunity for a genuine political dialogue under the Road Map. In this process, both parties have to stand firm against provocations by extreme elements trying to undermine the gradual yet momentous gains made so far. The Palestinians must carry on with their reform process, paying special attention to the rehabilitation of the security sector. For that matter, Israel must help in sustaining a positive atmosphere, consolidating efforts for reform. The Gaza initiative must be followed by similar steps in the West Bank. Israeli settlement activities must come to an end. The construction of the wall should be halted. The parties have to refrain from unilateral moves that might prejudice a final status agreement. The relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, as well as the principle of "land for peace" and bilateral understandings constitute the pillars for a negotiated, just, comprehensive and sustainable settlement of the conflict in the Middle East. In this framework, we believe that it is high time for the realization of the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side, in peace and security, within recognized borders.

With this understanding, Turkey has been providing the Palestinian Authority with assistance in health, education, public financing, institution-building, security, tourism and agriculture under an action plan initiated in 2003. The Ramallah Office of the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) has become operational several months ago. We also help to promote civil society and private sector contacts to strengthen the dialogue between the two parties. Through the efforts of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), a tri-lateral process among

Israeli, Palestinian and Turkish business communities has now been institutionalized as the "Ankara Forum."

Mr. President,

Turkey also supports all international efforts to resolve the Middle East issue. We maintain close contacts with all sides and try to create a synergy on the ground in order to further promote dialogue and cooperation. In the context of broader picture, the international community should always bear in mind the potential impact of other tracks on the much desired and long awaited environment of lasting peace and security in the Middle East. The Syrian and Lebanese tracks need to be re-activated so that a peaceful, stable and prosperous environment for all the peoples of the Middle East can be achieved. For its part, Turkey stands ready to work with the international community to contribute to the resumption of a meaningful progress in all tracks of the Middle East Peace Process.

I thank you, Mr. President.