Mr. President,

Yesterday was a historic day. On that day, the United Nations granted Palestine the status of a non-member observer state of this august body. The day will be remembered as a milestone in the road to achieve full statehood of the Palestine people and peace in the Middle East. We are proud to be a co-sponsor of the resolution that granted this status. We are pleased to stay on the right side of the history. It was not our political and strategic choice but our moral obligation to stand by the oppressed people of Palestine in their right struggle for self determination and independence.

Mr. President,

The decision was taken on an auspicious day, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Sixty-five years ago on this day, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 181, which partitioned the land of historic Palestine into two states; State of Israel and an Arab state of Palestine. For the Palestinian, the statehood evaded for more than six decades. With the overwhelming support that the resolution received, we can genuinely hope that Palestine will soon enjoy the full membership of the United Nations and perform as a sovereign and active member like any other nation. We regret that some delegations could not support this historic decision that is a step towards peace and security in the Middle East.

We are convince that the new status will provide much needed impetus to the stalled peace process, contrary to what some apprehend. The progress on Palestinian status at the United Nations will generate a new dynamism in the peace process and uphold the two-State solution espoused by the international community.

Some delegations argued that the status should have been decided through negotiations between the two parties, not by this multilateral body. The history does not support them. Bangladesh is a case in point. My country came into being through struggle for self determination. We proceeded in similar fashion in this multilateral forum; first we received the approval of the UN General Assembly and eventually the endorsement of the Security Council. Bangladesh emerged as a responsible and proud member of the community of nations by this multilateral move. The country Israel that objected this UN General Assembly resolution was founded in the land of Palestine through an UN resolution, not by any bilateral negotiation.

The past year has been characterized by the stalemate in the peace process and the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. There has been no sign of resuming
peace negotiations. Israel continues to refuse to freeze its settlement activity and adhere to other terms of reference of the peace process. A Palestinian state cannot emerge out of bilateral negotiations in such a scenario as some countries suggested. The people of Palestine languish under unilateral Israeli occupation, unilateral blockade and unilateral closers day after day, year after year. They are left with no choice but to approach this august body and seek whatever redress is possible.

Mr. President,

The report of the Committee on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the report of the Secretary General reflect, yet again, appalling human rights and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We regret that repeated appeals of the international community to improve the deteriorating conditions of the Palestinian people remain unheeded. The illegal separation wall continues to divide and isolate communities, destroying livelihoods and preventing hundreds of thousands access to their jobs, families, markets, schools and hospitals. Israel continues to build the wall on West Bank land, contrary to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. Walls are not a solution and echoing President Ronald Reagan, may I ask to tear down these walls to have sustainable peace and security. Gaza borders have been subject to a regime of closure that is without precedent anywhere on this planet earth. The quality of life of the Palestinians had already diminished to subsistence level. Periodic escalation of violence only leads to further despair and desperation. Is Israel doing so purposefully to generate fear, fury and distress among Palestinians? The recent attacks in Gaza were, yet again, flagrant violation of international law and utter disregard for international outcry by the occupying power Israel. Question is; will not such acts generate more hatred, foment further polarization and extremism? It is time to review and reflect and make strategic choices for a better future for both the peoples.

Mr. Chairman,

One issue that deserves the most serious attention is the continued construction of Jewish settlement in the occupied territories. The international community made repeated calls to cease such activities and Israel has time and again expressed commitment to do so. The settlements present an existential threat to the viability of a future Palestinian state. It is contrary to international law and the road map, and must cease. The International Court of Justice described the violation by Israel of the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination as the violation of an *erga omnes* obligation. If we are serious about peace in the Middle-East, we must exert collective pressure on Israel to stop expansion of illegal settlements and dismantle the existing ones in line with its obligations under article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Mr. President,

The upgraded status of Palestine is a small step toward amending historical injustice. Much work lies ahead to create the conditions that will allow the resumption of meaningful negotiations and preserve the viability of the two-State solution. Our goal remains realizing the inalienable and legitimate aspiration of the Palestinian people by creating an independent, viable, contiguous and sovereign State of Palestine based on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with Israel consistent with relevant Security Council resolutions, and in accordance with the Quartet road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of land for peace. It needs our collective resolve. Otherwise, peace, hope and prosperity of the peoples in the holy land will remain as elusive as ever. Let us hope that the passing of this resolution will lead to better understanding and urgency between Israel and Palestine to restart the stalled peace negotiation for achieving a lasting peace in the Middle-east.

I thank you.