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STATEMENT

BY

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DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

AT

**THE UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR
ON
ASSISTANCE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

**FAO HEADQUARTERS,
ROME
27 FEBRUARY 2013**

Mr Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

Allow me on behalf of the people of Namibia to express our sincere appreciation for the convening of this important Meeting in Rome. We thank FAO for providing us with a venue and putting excellent facilities at our disposal. Let me also convey Namibia's gratitude to you Mr. Chairman, and through you, to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for convening this important United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People. I also wish to thank the UN Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat for a commendable job in assisting the Committee in its efforts on behalf of the people of Palestine, who are still regrettably subjected to foreign occupation.

There is no shred of doubt that the situation in the Occupied Territory of Palestine continues to face numerous challenges and test of time. Mindful of the multiple challenges, Namibia recognizes the compelling need to assist the people of Palestine to overcome these challenges brought to bear by the Israeli occupation and to seize opportunity to achieve the independence of a viable and continuous State of Palestine. Hence, Namibia attaches great importance to the issue of the rights to self-determination of the people of Palestine.

Mr. Chairman,

Last year on 29 November, the General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to accord Palestine a non-member observer State status in the United Nations. It was a historic vote reaffirming the international community's belief in the principle of self-determination, in particular with regard to the people of Palestine. We, however, noted with grave concern that following that important vote, Israel in total disregard to international opinion, announced its intentions to proceed with the illegal construction of thousands of settlement units on confiscated Palestinian land, including the E-1 area in east of the Occupied East Jerusalem as well as in and around Bethlehem area and other parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The illegal expansion and construction of Israeli settlements in and around East Jerusalem are nothing but, an attempt to alter the legal status of the city and its physical, demographic and cultural character. The prevailing situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is of grave concern to us as it is taking us farther and farther away from the two-State solution for peace on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. Thus we call on the international community, including the Security Council, to uphold its responsibilities and act decisively. The construction of settlements and the demolitions of Palestinian homes are not only inconsistent with international law, but killing any future prospect of

a two State solution. These actions and many other acts of provocations are clear and present danger to peace and stability. We, therefore, condemn any action that frustrates genuine efforts to achieve durable peace between Israel and Palestine. However, the Israeli authorities as the occupying power must demonstrate beyond any reasonable doubt, that they are committed to peace and must refrain from counterproductive actions that are likely to impact negatively on peace process. Namibia shares the conviction that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of peace and stability in the Middle East. We have therefore, come here today, to express our support for the revival of the Middle East peace process, based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Quartet's Road Map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides. There is no substitute for negotiations to that end, but the process of negotiation cannot become open-ended and cannot be used as a cover for the continuation and deepening of the occupation and the continued denial of the rights of the Palestinian people. Thus, while we express our support for the resumption of peace process; we caution that it should not be turned into a perpetual orbit with no destination. It must be based on clear parameters, within a specified timeframe, and serious efforts must be made to achieve its longstanding objectives.

Mr Chairman

The impact of the occupation on the socio-economic and humanitarian situation in Palestine is severe. The continued imposition of closures and restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, have detrimentally affected the rights of Palestinians to health care, including access for pregnant women to health services for antenatal care and safe delivery, education, employment, development and freedom of movement. In addition, Israel, the occupying Power, has also on several occasions withheld the clearance of tax revenues legally owed to Palestine, causing extensive economic problems.

The people of Palestine are subjected to inhuman blockade and separation walls that prevent them to access the basic human needs. They have been and continue to be denied the fundamental rights to their land and many have been refugees for generations. We therefore, call on the international community to demonstrate its resolve and compel Israel to end its occupation of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and abide by its legal obligations including those under the 4th Geneva Convention.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, Namibia reaffirms its unequivocal support and recognition of the State of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders. While we acknowledge the status of Palestine as a non-member observer State and its full membership in UNESCO, we look forward to the day when Palestine would be admitted as a full member of the United Nations. This is a goal which Namibia will continue to persistently support and assist to be attained. We do so out of conviction that the people of Palestine have rights to their land and to their freedom in their independent, viable and contiguous State to live side by side with the state of Israel in shared peace and security. Namibia believes that this is the only path that will lead to a viable and durable solution in the Middle East.

I thank you.