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STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. NEVILLE GERTZE

AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

**74TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

AT

THE SECURITY COUNCIL

ON

**THE OPEN DEBATE IN CONNECTION WITH THE
AGENDA ITEM “THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE
EAST, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN
QUESTION”**

**NEW YORK
28 OCTOBER 2019**

Mr. President,

1. Namibia thanks you for organizing this Open Debate on the important topic of the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.
2. I would also like to thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process for his briefing on the situation in the region.
3. My delegation aligns itself with the Statement to be delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. President,

4. Since my last statement before this august body on this most fundamental issue of international peace and security, the situation on the ground has not changed. Furthermore, as outlined by the Special Coordinator in his 11th briefing to the Security Council on the implementation of Council resolution 2334, no concrete steps have been taken to implement this resolution.
5. No steps were taken to “immediately and completely cease all settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem”. On the contrary, Israeli authorities advanced some 3,000 housing units in the occupied West Bank, including some 400 units in East Jerusalem. I take this opportunity to reiterate that settlements are illegal under international law and represent an obstacle to peace and to the two-state solution. We are also extremely concerned at statements made on Israel’s annexation of the Jordan Valley. Annexation is strictly prohibited under international law.
6. Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures by Israeli authorities also represent an obstacle to peace. These actions have continued unabated, displacing men, women and children.

Mr. President,

7. UNRWA plays a fundamental role in the region. The Agency provides services to the more than 5 million Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza. This provision of vital services represents a stabilizing element in a region that continues to be the victim of violence. Namibia remains concerned by the ongoing financial shortfall that UNRWA

continues to suffer from. We also take this opportunity to reaffirm Namibia support for the Agency and look forward to renewing its mandate.

Mr. President,

8. We take note that the overall levels of violence in Gaza have decreased. We take this opportunity to condemn all forms of violence committed against civilians. Namibia welcome the increase in energy supply to households in Gaza, which has more than doubled, as reported by the Special Coordinator. The easing of the import and export restrictions by Israel and the extension of the permitted fishing zone to 15 nautical miles from the coast are also welcome developments. Despite these positive steps taken, the humanitarian situation remains extremely concerning. Namibia remains particularly worried about the state of the health system, which remains on the brink of collapse. In July, 44% of essential medicines in Gaza were completely depleted and 26% of essential medical disposables had less than a month's supply remaining. These staggering numbers therefore underline the fundamental ongoing presence of the UNRWA health centers which see an average of 100 patients a day.

Mr. President,

9. There is an urgency to solve the ongoing fiscal crisis faced by the Palestinian Authority. The continuation of this crisis is impacting an already fragile Palestinian economy, and threatens to destabilize an already volatile situation. We urge parties to implement and respect their bilateral agreements.

Mr. President,

10. It has been almost three years since the adoption of the historic 2334 resolution. This resolution provided Palestinians with hope and expectations for a solution to be found to this drawn-out conflict. However, since its adoption, the humanitarian, social and political situation has only worsened and tensions have risen drastically. Actions taken have severely undermined the process of reaching a mutually acceptable, just and lasting solution. The people of Palestine have the fundamental right to self-determination and independence. We must achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians, with the establishment of two States, co-existing in an atmosphere of peace and security. No amount of humanitarian and economic support can substitute a negotiated two-state

solution, which is the only solution to meet the legitimate aspirations and security needs of both Israelis and Palestinians.

I thank you.