



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN
Geneva

Statement

**Statement by Pakistan on behalf of ASIA PACIF GROUP
at the Sixty-Seventh Session of the Trade and Development Board**

**Agenda item 10: Report on UNCTAD Assistance to the Palestinian people
(1st October)**

Mr. President,
Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD Isabelle Durant,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. The Asia Pacific Group commends UNCTAD for its professional and well written report on UNCTAD's assistance to the Palestinian people. The report takes stock of activities undertaken by the UNCTAD to provide assistance to the Palestinian people in 2019-20. The report appraises the Member States and the international community of important updates on the economic and social conditions and portrays certain worrying trends and deplorable facts.

Mr. Chairman:

2. The Group notes with concern worsening socioeconomic conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. High rates of poverty and unemployment which have persisted even before the COVID pandemic, have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita has further declined in the third consecutive year. In 2019-20 the Palestinian economy grew only by 0.9 percent.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group expresses concern that more than half of the population in the occupied Gaza Strip is living under the poverty line of \$4.6 a day and the situation is further deteriorating as exemplified by lack of clean water, electricity shortages, debilitated sewage system and collapsing healthcare system.

4. UNCTAD's report points out that Israeli occupying forces have erected over 600 military checkpoints to convert Occupied Palestinian Territory into disconnected islands. The report estimates that check points alone cost the Occupied West Bank including

Est Jerusalem economy a minimum 6% of GDP and increase average trade cost by US\$538 per shipment. This contributes to a huge and persistent trade deficit, which reached 34% of GDP in 2019.

5. The Group notes with concern the impact of Israeli occupation on the fiscal situation of the Palestinian Government amounts to \$144 million per year. It is further heightened by the unilateral Israeli deductions from Palestinian revenue, undermining Palestinian Government's ability to meet its obligation and to provide the necessary services needed for its people.

6. It is clear that the impact of such fiscal losses on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory will be enormous. Severe shortage of public revenue is hampering the Palestinian Government under occupation from investing in people, thus hindering progress towards achieving the SDGs; especially SDG-1 - no poverty; SDG-3 - good health; SDG-4 - quality education; SDG-6 clean water and sanitation; SDG-8 - decent work and economic growth; and SDG-16 - peace, justice and strong institutions.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The Group echoes UNCTAD recommendation for action by the international community to stand by the Palestinian people to ensure that the Palestinian Government and the Palestinian people can overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and start the recovery process as soon as possible. There is no alternative to support and solidarity by the international community with the Palestinian people.

8. The Group urges UNCTAD to make all efforts to secure regular and extra- budgetary resources required for full implementation of the General Assembly resolutions on Palestine and further strengthen its programme of assistance to the Palestinian people with adequate resources.

9. The Group encourages UNCTAD to assess the economic cost of occupation in accordance with the mandate given to it in paragraph 55(dd) of the Nairobi Maafikiano.

10. Finally, the Group reiterates that the establishment of the independent State of Palestine, as called for by the international community and numerous UN resolutions, is the only viable route for prosperity and lasting peace in the Middle East and beyond.

11. I thank you, Mr. President.