Thank you Mr. President.

I wish to thank the Secretary General for his reports on agenda items 37 and 38.

2. As in the past, the reports indicate systematic pattern of unchecked violation of international humanitarian law and constant deterioration of political and security situation in the Middle East. Earlier this year, the adoption of the Road Map had rekindled hope for a meaningful dialogue amongst the concerned parties, leading to establishment of two independent states in the Middle East, thus putting an end to a longstanding dispute in the most volatile region of the world. However, violence has since resurfaced against unarmed civilians in the occupied territories putting the process initiated after the adoption of the Road Map in doldrums.

Mr. President,

3. As mentioned in the Secretary General’s reports, the actions and practices of the Occupation forces are against all legal instruments pertaining to the situation of the people living in the Occupied territories, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Fourth Geneva Convention prescribes specific obligations for an occupying power in relation to the people living in the Occupied Territories, described as “protected persons”. The Convention prohibits the occupying power from willfully killing, ill treating, or deporting protected people. The report mentions frequent resort to all these practices which resulted in over 2800 killings among Palestinians and of three civilian UN staff members.

Mr. President,

4. A fundamental principle of international law, flowing from the United Nations Charter, is the illegality of the acquisition of territory by use of force. The Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and all subsequent international agreements on the Middle East have been based on this principle. The Quartet’s peace plan is also based on the principle of Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories in exchange for durable peace.

5. However, the continued settlement activity in the occupied territories including building of a separation wall negates all agreed principles. Besides being illegal, all these activities entail enormous humanitarian suffering for the affected Palestinian people and seriously undermine the prospects for a just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute. The Secretary General had earlier described the separation wall and the settlements as “serious obstacles to the achievement of a two-state solution”. If remained unchecked, these activities would present the world irreversible “fait accompli” even before the final settlement under the Road Map.

Mr. President,

6. The occupation forces often argue that their actions are necessary to fight terrorism and enhance security. It is difficult to agree with this contention. Security cannot be enhanced by intensifying repression and coercion. Instead, genuine security would only flow from accepting the right of the occupied people to uphold their separate identity and exercise their inalienable rights including their right to self-determination.

Mr. President,
7. Each member of the General Assembly has a stake in peace in the Holy Land on the basis of the General Assembly and the Security Council resolutions and Crown Prince Abdullah’s peace plan. One viable way to achieve peace is the full and faithful implementation of the Road Map which promotes the vision of two states—Palestine and Israel—living side by side in peace and security within the recognized borders. It is our hope that the international community will remain engaged with the concerned parties for expeditious realization of this vision.

I thank you Mr. President.