

Statement by Mr. Mansoor Ahmad Khan, Delegate of Pakistan on the Agenda Item 93: “Permanent Sovereignty of the Palestinian People in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab Population in the Occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources” in the Second Committee during the Fifty-seventh Session of the UN General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset we would like to express our gratitude to the Secretary General and the Economic and Social Council for West Asia for a comprehensive report on Agenda Item 93 (Document No. A/57/63-E/2002/21) entitled “Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan”.

Mr. Chairman,

The relentless occupation of the Palestinian territory and denial of their fundamental rights, including the right to self-determination continues to cause serious economic, social and environmental problems for the people of Palestine. This has not only hampered their economic growth, but has a deep psychological impact on the social lives of the people. The impact of this occupation has following major aspects:

Firstly, the upsurge in the violence during the period under report has further aggravated the economic and social conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories. The deterioration in the security situation has led to an increasing sense of hopelessness and frustration among the people due to increasing unemployment and retarding growth.

Secondly, continued growth in the Settlements on the Occupied Palestinian Territories is a matter of serious concern. Para 44 of the Report under title “Israeli settlements” indicates that the net increase in the settlement population just in the first half of 2001 was 2,561, which is very high from any standard. This has serious implications on the lives of the Palestinian people. The settlements have restricted the growth of Palestinian communities and have deprived the Palestinian people of valuable agricultural land, an important resource for their survival.

Thirdly, the settlements and other measures imposed on the occupied Palestinian territories continue to pose serious threat to the environment, water and other natural resources. The dumping of the waste water in Palestinian areas without treatment is causing contamination of water resource and environment. Outlying Palestinian villages have no access to drinking water. The report indicates that rapid land degradation is taking place due to felling of trees and blockade of roads used by Palestinians.

Fourthly, the occupation and increase in violence has a devastating impact on the Palestinian economy. The lack of economic activity has resulted in deterioration in the living conditions. Almost 50 percent of the Palestinian people are living below the poverty line. The GNP has severely declined. Over 50 percent of the Palestinian workforce is unemployed. The political uncertainty and the stalling of the peace process have inhibited the flow of investment and growth of infra-structure.

Mr. Chairman,

The population in the occupied Syrian Golan is facing similar conditions. The increasing unemployment and declining economy are causing deterioration in the living conditions of the Arab population in Syrian Golan. The increasing settlements and unequal distribution of resources has aggravated the economic and social situation in the area. The restrictions on

movement of Arab population in the occupied Golan has further limited the access to economic opportunities.

The deterioration in the economic and social conditions of the Palestinians and the Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan emanates from foreign occupation. The international community must take urgent measures for bringing an end to the violence and facilitate the resumption of the peace process for establishment of peace in the region. The durable peace can only be achieved by recognizing and providing the people under foreign occupation their right to self-determination.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan extends its unequivocal support to the struggle of the Palestinian people for the realization of their fundamental rights, including their inalienable right to self-determination in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions. We also regard occupied Syrian Golan as an integral part of Syria.

Mr. Chairman,

Realization of these basic rights is essential for eliminating social and economic injustices highlighted in the Report. Thank you, Mr. Chairman