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List of Acronyms

ACRI - Association of Civil Rights in Israel
AHLC - Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee
ARG - Arab Regional Grid
CBS - Central Bureau of Statistics
COGAT - Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories
DFID - Department for International Development (UK)
DNA – Detailed Needs Assessment
ECD - Early childhood development
ERW - Explosive Remnants of War
EU - European Union
FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GBV - Gender-Based Violence
GDP - Gross Domestic Product
GEDCo - Gaza Electricity Distribution Company
GNC - Government of National Consensus
GPP - Gaza Power Plant
GRM - Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism
GRAMMS – Gaza Reconstruction Materials Monitoring System
ICA - Israeli Civil Administration
ICC - International Criminal Court
ICJ - International Court of Justice
IDF - Israeli Defence Forces
IEC - Israel Electric Corporation
ILO - International Labour Organization
IMF - International Monetary Fund
IPE - Initiative for the Palestinian Economy
kg - Kilogramme
km - Kilometre
kV - Kilovolt
m² - Square metre

m³/d - Cubic metres per day
MCM/y - Million cubic metres per year
MICS – Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey
MMU – Materials Monitoring Unit
MW - Megawatt
MoCA - Ministry of Civil Affairs
MoEHE - Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoH - Ministry of Health
Mol – Ministry of Interior
MoPWH - Ministry of Public Works and Housing
MoSA - Ministry of Social Affairs
NERRP - National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan
NGEST - Northern Gaza Emergency Sewage Treatment Plant
NM - Nautical mile
NIS - New Israeli Shekel
OCHA - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
oPt - Occupied Palestinian territory
PA - Palestinian Authority
PCBS - Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PLC – Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO - Palestine Liberation Organization
PMA - Palestine Monetary Authority
PNDP - Palestinian National Development Plan
PWA - Palestinian Water Authority
SRP - Strategic Response Plan
STLV - Short-term low-volume
UN - United Nations
UNCTAD - United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF - United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF - United Nations Children’s Fund
UNOPS - United Nations Office for project Services
UNRWA - United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

UNSCO - Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process

US - United States

WFP - World Food Programme

WHO - World Health Organization

Executive Summary

Since the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) meeting in September 2014, concerns have grown about the lack of a political horizon for the resumption of negotiations. The international community has become increasingly frustrated at the lack of progress on political negotiations. The coming period will be critical for the future of the peace process. The United Nations has repeatedly warned that maintaining the status quo is not tenable. It will inexorably lead to the continued erosion of living conditions for Palestinians and for Israelis alike and will undermine the security and stability of all.

The new Government of Israel should take credible steps, including a freeze of settlement activity, to promote a resumption of meaningful negotiations. The Secretary-General has indicated that he is ready to work with all in order to encourage a return to negotiations, on the basis of an agreed framework. Continued security cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli authorities remains a cornerstone for peaceful resolution. Both parties must expend every effort to build upon existing agreements, including relevant UN Security Council resolutions, the Roadmap and the Arab Peace Initiative, to gain momentum towards a final status agreement.

The United Nations ultimate objective in Gaza is to see the lifting of all closures within the framework of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and in a manner which addresses Israel's legitimate security concerns. In the absence of such a change, the temporary Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) enables the entry, use and monitoring of "dual use" construction materials into Gaza and offers the possibility of implementing large-scale projects that can bring reconstruction, jobs and stability. The GRM was designed as a temporary measure implemented purely to address the critical need for entry of construction materials in the immediate post-conflict period. After a slow start, the GRM has rapidly scaled up. As of 20 May, assessments for the repair of 94,926 damaged housing units conducted by the United Nations have been submitted through the GRM for processing to receive construction material. A total of 84,865 households have now procured the materials necessary to repair their homes.

In addition, the private sector and the international community have submitted plans for 168 infrastructure and construction projects, including hospitals, schools, housing projects, service infrastructure and roads. Of these, 85 projects are approved and eight are ongoing. It is now essential to finalize the "shelter stream" which will allow totally destroyed houses to be rebuilt and new houses to be constructed. Given the scale of work now required it is also essential that all available contractors be approved within the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism Materials Monitoring System (GRAMMS). In addition, clear information has to be disseminated to all Gazans explaining how they can avail themselves of the GRM and the relevant points of contact within the Government of Palestine. Ensuring sufficient capacity at crossings is an additional enabler for reconstruction. In that regard, we are encouraged by the upgrading of the Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings to handle 800 trucks per day and plans to further raise capacity to 1,000 trucks per day.

The energy and water (wastewater treatment and desalination) sectors represent a fulcrum which makes progress across all sectors possible, including private sector growth. Improvements in these sectors will also have an immediate effect on the civilian population and would help the Gaza Strip increase its self-sufficiency helping to stabilize the overall situation. Annex A of the United Nations' September report to the AHLC outlined current gaps in the energy and water sectors along with short, medium and long-term measures to address those gaps.

There are grave concerns about the implications of on-going political divisions within the Palestinian political leadership on the operationalization of the GNC. Prime Minister

Hamdallah's efforts to find a solution for public sector employees in Gaza is welcome and particularly his commitment that nobody will be left behind. We encourage all factions to support these efforts. The United Nations also stands ready to work with all stakeholders and support the Government in mobilizing the necessary resources for this process. A comprehensive reconciliation must include the GNC resuming control over the crossings into Israel and Egypt. The responsibility for addressing these issues lies first and foremost with the Palestinian authorities. But it also partly rests with the United Nations and the international community, which must empower the Government to take up its leadership role in Gaza, including through the fulfilment of donor pledges of US\$5.4 billion (including \$2.5 billion in new funding) to support Gaza's massive reconstruction needs and the budget of the Prime Minister Hamdallah's government through 2017. Economic activity contracted in 2014 for the first time since 2006, driven largely by the volatile political situation in the second half of 2014. Restrictions on economic activity in Area C of the West Bank have been detrimental to the whole Palestinian economy. The economic gap between Gaza and West Bank is growing, due primarily to the impact of on-going restrictions on free movement of people and goods to and from the Gaza Strip. The political and security situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continued to deteriorate.

Putting the Government's finances on a stable footing remains a considerable challenge. The GNC's financial crisis was compounded by the Government of Israel's decision to withhold tax revenues. While the recent release of outstanding tax revenues by Israel is welcome, it is essential that agreement on a sustainable solution on tax collection in line with the Paris Protocol of the Oslo Accords is reached.

The end of the hostilities in Gaza and the continued lack of a political horizon coincided with a gradual escalation of tensions between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with heightened levels of violence and renewed settlement activities. The situation in occupied East Jerusalem continued to deteriorate, revealing the extent of the frustration that grips the Palestinian population after almost 50 years of occupation and underscoring the imperative for re-invigorated involvement of the international community. The increasingly religious nature of violence in Jerusalem and parts of the West Bank is particularly alarming. In the context of the increasing tensions in East Jerusalem, a series of targeted attacks on places of worship and other religious sites were recorded during the reporting period. Against the backdrop of rising tensions and increasing violence, the nearly 300,000 Palestinians resident in occupied East Jerusalem continue to face long-standing obstacles to their access to housing. There are also continuing challenges in accessing health facilities in the city. Access to and quality of education for Palestinians is likewise of continuing concern.

Area C is fundamental to the contiguity of the West Bank and the viability of Palestine and its economy. The process for approval of outline plans in Area C remains slow. Currently only three community-driven outline plans for four communities out of a total of 99 outline plans (some of which were submitted in 2010) covering 113 communities have been approved by the Israeli Civil administration (ICA). The United Nations continues to support local Palestinian authorities in developing adequate social infrastructure in Area C but the programme faces challenges due to the slow pace of Israeli approvals. The United Nations continues to support the construction and expansion of 15 schools and health centres in Area C, valued at approximately \$5 million. As previously reported, a package of agriculture-related works, valued at approximately \$5 million, to be implemented by the United Nations was not approved within the agreed timelines and, as a result, part of the funding has now been withdrawn. Finally, the United Nations remains concerned about the recent moves to relocate Bedouin communities near Abu Nwar in the politically sensitive E1 area of the West Bank that may be linked to further settlement construction.

Introduction

1. This report provides an update on changes on the ground in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) since the last meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) on 22 September 2014. The report covers the period 1 October 2014 to 15 May 2015 and outlines the key issues and recommendations on which the United Nations, together with the parties and the international community, will continue to work to make progress.
2. The report opens by providing an overview of the current political context. It outlines key developments with regards to Palestinian state-building, highlighting challenges and achievements, and then summarizes recent socio-economic trends across the oPt. The report then provides detailed analysis of the situation on the ground in the West Bank, including east Jerusalem. Lastly, it provides a detailed analysis of the situation in the Gaza Strip, including progress and challenges related to the reconstruction effort.

Political Context

3. *The period was defined by the absence of a framework for the resumption of negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians to end the occupation and conflict, as relations between the two sides continued to be plagued by mistrust.* Subsequent to the 26 August Egypt-brokered, open-ended ceasefire that concluded the 50-day hostilities between Israel and Palestinian armed groups in Gaza, Egypt hosted a donor conference co-chaired by Norway on 12 October. The *Cairo Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza* resulted in the international community pledging some \$5.4 billion (including \$2.5 billion in new funding) to support Gaza's massive reconstruction needs and the budget of the Government of Palestine through 2017. In an effort to facilitate reconstruction efforts, the United Nations brokered an agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Government of National Consensus (GNC) establishing procedures for the entry, use and monitoring of "dual use" materials into Gaza. The Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) was designed as a temporary measure to address the critical need for entry of construction materials in the immediate post-conflict period. It is not a substitute for the lifting of all closures in Gaza in line with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). Notwithstanding the broad international financial commitments made in Cairo, implementation of the National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan (NERRP) and the UN Support Plan for the Transformation of the Gaza Strip (UN Support Plan) has been slow, in part due to insufficient funding.
4. *The end of the hostilities in Gaza and the continued lack of a political horizon coincided with a gradual escalation of tensions between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with heightened levels of violence and renewed settlement activities.* The downward spiral of unilateral actions and counter-actions, provocations and access restrictions at the holy sites in Jerusalem further exacerbated the divisions between the two sides. In Jerusalem, the situation only began to calm after separate meetings were held in Amman in November between President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu with King Abdullah of Jordan and US Secretary of State Kerry, establishing confidence-building measures and firm commitments to maintain the status quo regarding the holy sites. These efforts notwithstanding, practical solutions to address the core issues perpetuating the conflict, including an end to the Israeli occupation and addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns, have yet to emerge and appear increasingly remote.

5. *Despite some developments, progress on operationalization of the Government of National Consensus (GNC) within the Gaza strip remained slow.* Led by Palestinian Prime Minister Hamdallah, on 9 October 2014, the GNC convened its first unity government meeting in Gaza since Hamas seized control of the territory in June 2007. Despite the Prime Minister's announcement that efforts were underway to implement the 23 April 2014 intra-Palestinian "Beach Camp" unity accord, after seven months and a subsequent visit by the Prime Minister on 25 March 2015, there has been little progress. Egypt has yet to convene indirect talks to further consolidate the 26 August 2014 ceasefire and the GNC has not been empowered by authorities in Gaza to assume its rightful security and governance responsibilities there. A comprehensive reconciliation must include the GNC resuming control over the crossings into Israel and Egypt. The responsibility for addressing these issues lies first and foremost with the Palestinian authorities. But it also partly rests with the United Nations and the international community, which must empower the Government to take up its leadership role in Gaza, including through the fulfilment of donor pledges that were made at the Cairo conference last year.
7. *Despite these setbacks, Prime Minister Hamdallah has been demonstrating renewed commitment on the crucial reintegration and reform of Gaza's public sector.* On 19 April when a delegation of GNC ministers based in Ramallah travelled to Gaza for one week to begin the first step of registering former employees (recruited before June 2007). Discussions with Hamas broke down the following day, regrettably prompting the ministers' withdrawal. The United Nations views the success of civil service reform as critical to establishing genuine Palestinian reconciliation, including GNC control over the border crossings and organization of long overdue Presidential and Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections. Strengthened Palestinian unity and improved living conditions on the ground in Gaza may not only contribute to a return to negotiations, but ultimately also to their success.
8. *The security environment in Gaza and the West Bank remained fragile and unpredictable with high levels of violence and resulting casualties.* Between October 2014 and end March 2015, 17 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces and 2,067 were injured, including 375 children and 44 women. The vast majority of injuries occurred in the West Bank. This represents a decline when compared to the previous six months, which owing to the hostilities between Palestinian armed groups and Israel, witnessed the highest casualty toll since the start of the Israeli occupation. During the current reporting period, ten Israelis were killed, including two women and two children. This also represents a decline when compared to the previous six months.
9. *The continued failure to establish a credible political horizon led to the Palestinians pursuing an increasingly internationalized strategy for resolution of the conflict.* On 30 December 2014, the Security Council rejected a Palestinian-drafted resolution submitted by Jordan calling, *inter alia*, for a final peace agreement to be reached within a year and an end to Israeli occupation by end-2017. The resolution failed to gather the minimum nine out of 15 votes in the Council. The following day, the Palestinian leadership signed instruments of accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (as well as 17 other treaties), to which it formally gained accession on 1 April 2015. In retaliation, and in violation of the Paris Protocol of the Oslo Accords, on 3 January 2014 Israel announced its decision to withhold Palestinian tax revenues that it collects on its behalf of the Palestinian Authority. An agreement to release nearly \$500 million, representing four months' revenues, was finally reached on 18 April 2015.
10. *There is no immediate prospect that a return to negotiations with the Palestinians will be an immediate priority of the new Israeli administration.* Israel held a general election

on 17 March with Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Likud party winning the most seats. On 14 May, a new Israeli coalition Government headed by Prime Minister Netanyahu was confirmed by the Knesset. The new Government of Israel should take credible steps, including a freeze of settlement activity to promote a resumption of meaningful negotiations. The Secretary-General, however, has indicated that he is ready to work with all in order to encourage a return to negotiations, on the basis of an agreed framework. Continued security cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli authorities remains a cornerstone for peaceful resolution. Both parties must expend every effort to build upon existing agreements, including relevant UN Security Council resolutions, the Roadmap and the Arab Peace Initiative, to gain momentum towards a final status agreement.

11. *The international community has become increasingly frustrated at the lack of progress on political negotiations.* A number of European parliaments adopted non-binding resolutions calling upon their respective governments to recognize a Palestinian state. On 30 October 2014, Sweden officially recognized the State of Palestine. This brought the number of recognitions to 136. While highly significant developments, these steps should not be considered a substitute for a return to genuine peace talks between the two parties themselves.
12. *Against this backdrop, some within the international community are reassessing their approach to the peace process.* Establishment, possibly through a Security Council resolution, of a framework, including parameters, for future negotiations is under consideration. It is expected that any framework would note the potential incorporation of the Arab Peace Initiative as a basis for a negotiated settlement. The United Nations believes that the success of this and any future initiative would require a determined effort by all to rebuild the trust between the parties that has eroded so dramatically over the past months.

Palestinian State-Building

13. *There are grave concerns about the implications of on-going political divisions within the Palestinian political leadership on the operationalization of the GNC.* To date, there has been no concrete progress in regards to integration of administrative, legal and financial systems and, crucially, of the security services, between the Gaza Strip and West Bank. This lack of progress is impacting basic service provision in the Gaza Strip, such as in the health sector where the on-going divisions are undermining the ability of the Ministry of Health (MoH) to institute unified policies and strategies, ensure adequate provision of medicines, and facilitate payment of health workers. It is also a major impediment in the reconstruction effort. The creation of a “National Office for the Reconstruction of the Gaza Strip”, under the leadership of the Prime Minister supported by the newly appointed National Coordinator for Gaza Reconstruction, offers a new opportunity. But it will require all elements of the GNC to work together to quickly deliver on commitments to the people of Gaza. The visits of Prime Minister Hamdallah and the holding of cabinet meetings in Gaza are important. However, further concrete actions are now required to ensure the GNC starts to effectively deliver in all areas. This includes basic service provision, economic growth, democratic governance and security and law enforcement.
14. *Operationalization of the GNC as one unified government is also essential in order to safeguard state-building gains made in recent years and the support of international donors.* As noted consistently in previous United Nations reports to the AHLC over the

last five years, significant progress has been made by the Palestinian government in regards to fiscal reforms; establishment of public institutions; maintenance of rule of law and protection and promotion of human rights; and service delivery.ⁱ However, in the continuing absence of a single functioning government across the oPt, the pace of this progress will start to slow and roll back. Furthermore, if the *status quo* continues, international donors may begin to reduce their support and the resulting increased financial, political and security pressures will be felt throughout the oPt.

16. *Civil service reform is urgently required to reduce the fiscal burden and ensure continuity of basic services and other government functions.* The non-payment of salaries of civil servants has become a serious concern: it is undermining the delivery of public services in Gaza, placing an unnecessary financial burden on the GNC's core budget, and raising tensions between different groups. Approximately 40,000 individuals formerly employed by the *de facto* authorities have not been paid in full since April 2014. Whilst the Palestinian Authority employees have continued to be paid regularly, many did not receive their regular full salary for December 2014. The differing policies with regards payments of the two groups is also causing tensions and many are becoming increasingly frustrated, as evidenced in tens of staff storming the weekly GNC Cabinet meeting in Gaza on 14 January 2015. In October 2014, the United Nations facilitated a one-time humanitarian payment to some of the 23,000 staff in Gaza who had not been paid since April, but action on the broader issue is now more urgent than ever. Prime Minister Hamdallah continues his efforts to find an acceptable solution to the problem of public sector employees in Gaza, ensuring that nobody will be left behind. The United Nations calls upon all key parties to support these efforts and stands ready to support Prime Minister Hamdallah in this endeavour.
17. *The GNC's financial crisis was compounded by the Government of Israel's decision to withhold tax revenues.* As a result, the GNC was forced to increase borrowing from private banks, a wholly unsustainable solution.ⁱⁱ The action to withhold tax revenues not only exacerbated tensions but undermined the stability of the Palestinian institutions and the ability of Prime Minister Hamdallah's Government to carry out its responsibilities, including to pay public sector salaries and to provide needed services. The recent release of outstanding tax revenues by Israel is welcome. It is essential that agreement on a sustainable solution on tax collection in line with the Paris Protocol of the Oslo Accords is reached. This has to ensure predictable and unconditional transfer of tax revenues and offer transparency in relation to deductions made for monies owed by the Palestinian government.
18. *Multi-year financial support to GNC is critical to enhancing its fiscal stability.* In line with Palestine's 2014-2016 National Development Plan (PNDP), the international community should facilitate increased fiscal stability by providing multi-year funding for the government's core budget.ⁱⁱⁱ Multi-year commitments would enable the GNC to make longer-term administrative, legal and fiscal reforms, facilitate long-term investments in critical infrastructure and service delivery systems, and mitigate the need to resort to less sustainable and more costly short-term solutions to budget gaps.
19. *Despite the challenges faced during the reporting period, the GNC has made progress on a number of state-building objectives, in line with the PNDP.* In January 2015, the State of Palestine acceded to 18 international treaties, 16 of which were accepted by Secretary General of the United Nations following deposit of all relevant documentation. This follows the accession by Palestine to 13 international treaties during the previous reporting period. The Government has made significant efforts during the reporting period to begin implementation of treaties for which documents of accession were deposited in April 2014, including reviewing relevant national legislation

against these new international obligations and preparing preliminary reports on progress to the relevant treaty bodies.

20. *The GNC finalised a comprehensive assessment of progress against the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which will inform national decision and policy-making.* In April 2015, the government published the findings of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 5. The survey, which was led by Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) with technical and financial support by the United Nations, included a total of 11,000 households throughout Gaza and the West Bank including East Jerusalem, with data collection completed before the hostilities in July 2014. Findings confirmed development progress, such as high rates of sanitation and immunization coverage, but highlighted critical challenges, such as that 92 per cent of Palestinian children experience psychological aggression or physical punishment.
21. *The GNC has also made progress in the areas of social protection, education, health, water and energy, and livelihoods.*
 1. Up to 11,000 vulnerable households, 3,600 orphans and women and people with disabilities are currently benefiting from social protection support from the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA); the first social security system is being established, which will extend coverage to all private sector workers in the formal economy with a view to providing income security, combating poverty and social exclusion; and by mid-2015, a social security law will be finalised.
 2. Reconstruction/rehabilitation of classrooms has led to improved learning environments, the quality of the curriculum in government schools in the rest of the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been enhanced and access to education for children with disabilities has been increased.
 3. The MoH has introduced quality guidelines in 15 hospitals and extended implementation of integrated health services and staff training to a greater number of Primary Health Care centres for management of non-communicable diseases, reproductive and mental health; improvements have been made to health service infrastructure, including the construction of a hospital in Tubas governorate, and to governance, including contracting and negotiating reimbursement with referral hospitals; and the MoH has strengthened its core competencies for emergency risk management in line with International Health Regulations and is developing a National Emergency and Response Plan.
 4. National legislation on water has been approved; a national energy efficiency action plan has been developed; and construction of the first solar power station has been completed.
 5. The Ministry of Agriculture published its National Agriculture Sector Strategy in late 2014, including emerging needs and priorities in the aftermath of hostilities in Gaza. It has also fully institutionalised the National Animal Identification System with 180 staff trained and operational; and is leading development of a cross-ministerial Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary Action Plan aimed at improved food safety, animal and plant health, which in turn will raise production standards. In addition, the National Wage Committee has agreed on a set of actions to ensure proper implementation of the national minimum wage (adopted in 2012).
22. *The Palestinian leadership has continued to make progress towards gender equality and empowerment of women.* On 5 March 2015, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Central Council made a public commitment to a series of actions and standards that will be taken in towards securing full equality for women. Following concerted advocacy by

women's civil society institutions, supported by the United Nations, commitments included ensuring that women's quota in elections and representation in public office rose from 20 per cent to 30 per cent. Furthermore, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has launched the national framework for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security; the MoH has developed a National Reproductive Health Strategy, which will facilitate harmonization of reproductive healthcare provision at the national level. The MoH has also rolled out trainings on guidelines and protocols for detection, treatment and referral of gender-based violence cases at primary and secondary level.

23. *The UN remains committed, through the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), to supporting the GNC in achieving the goals outlined in the PNDP. Key areas of support include 1) Increasing economic empowerment, improving livelihoods, access to decent work and food security through assisting development of a National Agriculture Sector Strategy; strengthening the analytical capacity of PalTrade; and supporting the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) in improving targeting of the social safety net programme; 2) Improving governance through facilitating increased access to legal aid services and supporting accession to 23 international treaties and conventions; strengthening Ministry of Interior (MoI) institutional structures and civil oversight capacity; and building the capacity of the Palestinian Civil Defence (PCD) in emergency preparedness for disaster risk reduction; 3) Improving access to quality education through establishing systems to reduce violence in United Nations and government schools, and strengthening capacities for inclusive, child-friendly learning; 4) Improving equitable access to quality health services through supporting establishment of a National Institute of Public Health and helping 75 per cent of West Bank and 35 per cent of Gaza primary health clinics to offer reproductive health service packages; 5) Enhancing social protection systems through supporting development of a national social protection policy and Gender-based Violence (GBV) and psycho-social care guidelines for relevant ministries; and 6) Improving regulation and management of urban development, natural resources and cultural heritage through a national assessment of infrastructure against international best practices, rehabilitation of cultural heritage sites, and increasing access to safe drinking and domestic water and sanitation for over 150,000 people. To date, funding levels for the UNDAF are S\$553 million of the S\$2.15 billion needed over the 2014-16 period. These revised requirements include interventions previously presented under the UN Support Plan for the Transformation of the Gaza Strip.*

Socio-Economic Trends

24. *Economic activity contracted in 2014 for the first time since 2006, driven largely by the volatile political situation in the second half of 2014. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that in 2014 real GDP fell by nearly 1 per cent, the first contraction since 2006, with GDP declining by about 15 per cent in Gaza and a slowdown in economic activity in the West Bank in the second half of the year.^{iv} In the fourth quarter of 2014, unemployment rates saw some recovery after the Gaza hostilities and the increase in violence in the West Bank, with unemployment in Gaza decreasing from 47.4 per cent in the third quarter to 42.8 per cent and in West Bank decreasing from 19.2 to 17.4 per cent.^v Unemployment amongst youth remains the highest at 45.6 per cent across Palestine.^{vi} Even for those in employment, incomes are low and unstable: 23.5 per cent of wage employees in private sector receive less than minimum wage (1,450 NIS) and 51.9 per cent of employees are without a contract.^{vii}*

25. *Restrictions on economic activity in Area C of the West Bank have been detrimental to the whole Palestinian economy.* As noted in previous reports to the AHLC, Area C is richly endowed with natural resources but the economic potential they could bring is inhibited by the complex system of restrictions on access to and development of Area C. Rolling back Israeli restrictions would substantially improve prospects for sustained growth and likely result in a major increase in Palestinian GDP. Realising the full economic potential of Area C will require, firstly, the Israeli authorities to lift the movement and access restrictions that impede export of Palestinian products and limit access to Area C for tourists and investors; and secondly, the Palestinian authorities to initiate administrative reforms that would enable potential investors to more easily register businesses, enforce contracts, and acquire finance.^{viii} The World Bank has estimated that, if the restrictions on Area C were lifted, the combined direct and indirect benefits could total S\$3.4 billion (35 per cent of 2011 GDP), translating into additional tax revenues for the GNC of \$800 million a year. The bulk of this would come from agriculture and exploitation of Dead Sea minerals.^{ix}
26. *The economic gap between Gaza and West Bank is growing, due primarily to the impact of on-going restrictions on free movement of people and goods to and from the Gaza Strip.* Unemployment rates in the Gaza Strip have been consistently higher than in the West Bank for many years but due to deteriorating economic conditions in Gaza, this gap has widened in the last three years. The unemployment rate in Gaza has incrementally increased from 32.2 per cent in the fourth quarter 2012 to 42.8 per cent in the same quarter 2014, whereas the unemployment rate in the West Bank over this period has slightly decreased from 18.3 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2012 to 17.4 per cent in the same quarter in 2014.^x People working in Gaza have remained less well remunerated than those in the West Bank, with a lower average daily wage and far more workers in the private sector earning less than the minimum wage.^{xi} In addition, prices rose more strongly in the Gaza Strip in 2014, compared to the West Bank, meaning that wages need to rise more quickly in the Gaza Strip to hold living standards constant.^{xii} This growing inequality is symptomatic of the continuing physical and political divide between the Gaza Strip and West Bank but it is also contributing to instability and, in the long-term, will impede state-building efforts and the achievement of national development goals.
27. *The dire economic situation is continuing to drive high rates of food insecurity.* Latest estimates indicate that up to 1.6 million people in Palestine are food insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity.^{xiii} Despite the long-term generosity of the international community in providing humanitarian and development aid, the deteriorating socio-economic conditions including rising unemployment, have meant that 73 per cent of the population in Gaza and 21 per cent in the West Bank, simply cannot afford to buy enough food.^{xiv} It is likely that a proportion of those who were assessed in 2012 as being “vulnerable to food insecurity” are now “food insecure” due to the 2014 hostilities in Gaza or other factors. Addressing the underlying factors impeding economic growth is critical to increasing economic access to food for millions of Palestinians, reducing their dependency on aid and enabling the enjoyment of their economic and social rights.
28. *Continued financial support from the international donor community is essential to address the socio-economic situation. However, this assistance must be accompanied by action to address the underlying political obstacles to development.* Absent a significant improvement in the political situation on the ground, Palestinians will be unable to fulfil their economic potential and become self-sufficient. Since the current conditions are

likely to prevail at least in the medium-term, assistance from the international donor community will continue to be required.

29. *Multi-year funding for humanitarian and development assistance programmes implemented by the United Nations and partners is critical to address the socio-economic consequences of the deteriorating political situation.* In 2014, the international community provided \$499 million (54 per cent) of the \$929 million requested for humanitarian aid in Palestine through the Strategic Response Plan (SRP) 2014. The SRP was scaled up from \$390 million to \$929 million to address needs arising from the July-August hostilities in Gaza. So far in 2015, \$203 million has been provided, leaving a shortfall of \$502 million.

Situation on the Ground

West Bank Overview

30. *The political and security situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continued to deteriorate during the reporting period.* Since October 2014, 12 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank and 2016 were injured, the majority in regular and *ad hoc* demonstrations against Israeli policies which resulted in clashes between Israel forces and Palestinians. On 10 December 2014, Palestinian Minister Ziad Abu Ein died in the aftermath of an assault by an Israeli soldier during a protest near the village of Turmus Ayya that resulted in a confrontation with Israeli forces. The United Nations expressed its condolences for the Minister's death and urges the Government of Israel to ensure a full investigation. In the first four months of 2015, the United Nations noted an increase in search and arrest operations conducted by Israeli forces in the West Bank – a weekly average of 86 in 2015, compared to a weekly average of 75 in 2014.^{xv} An estimated 108 Palestinians were injured and 3260 arrested in such operations. Ten Israelis were killed by Palestinians, half of them in the West Bank and half in West Jerusalem, and at least 127 were injured, the vast majority being Israelis injured during stone or Molotov cocktail throwing incidents while travelling on West Bank roads. Palestinian security forces continued working to maintain law and order in the West Bank throughout the reporting period. This included the arrest of dozens of suspected militants in the days prior to the Israeli election in March.
31. *There has been a sharp increase in the number of Palestine refugees injured by Israel security forces.* In 2014, there was a 139 per cent increase in the number of refugees injured by live ammunition from Israeli security forces in and around refugee camps, as compared to 2013 (122 injuries, compared to 51 injuries in 2013). The number of camps where such incidents occurred also rose from 11 camps in 2013 to 16 of the 19 camps in the West Bank in 2014. In 2014, 12 of the 21 refugee fatalities in the West Bank were the result of live fire in and around refugee camps. The total number of refugees injured by live and non-live fire in camps has also increased substantially from 38 in 2012 to 778 in 2014. So far in 2015, two refugees have been killed and 77 injured in such incidents in the West Bank.
32. *The United Nations considers all settlement activity in the oPt contrary to international law and that the Government of Israel should put in place an immediate freeze on all such plans and reverse settlement activity.* Continuing settlement expansion is also eroding the confidence of the Palestinians and that of the international community, in the intentions of the Government of Israel in regards to peace negotiations and the two state solution.

35. *2014 saw the highest number ever of tenders for settlement construction in East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank for ten years and there are growing concerns regarding efforts to obtain legislative changes to allow further large-scale settlement expansion.* During the reporting period, a series of announcements were issued regarding the advancement of planning for housing units in settlements in East Jerusalem. This included nearly 1,000 residential units in Har Homa and Ramat Shlomo in October and the decision at the end of September to accelerate the process of constructing some 2,600 residential units in Givat Hamatos. According to the Israeli NGO Peace Now, 2014 saw the highest number of tenders issued for construction in settlements for ten years. Some 68 per cent of construction starts were outside the settlement blocks that are adjacent to the Green Line. The United Nations is also following with great concern a continuous effort by the Israeli government to change the legal status of settlement outposts thereby removing certain obstacles that constrain their expansion: according to Peace Now, 20 outposts have been “legalized” under the Netanyahu Governments. The United Nations is encouraged by the decision of the Israeli Supreme Court on 25 December in which it ordered the evacuation and demolition of Amona, a large settlement outpost, within two years. The United Nations looks forward to the swift implementation of this decision. In addition, the United Nations has taken note of declarations and actions by various Israeli politicians which are aimed at obtaining a formal endorsement by the state of the 2012 “Report on the legal Status of Building in Judea and Samaria” “Edmund Levi Report”, which would dramatically alter the legal framework which Israel applies to the oPt and thus clear the way for large-scale settlement expansion.
36. *Settlement expansion continues to have direct humanitarian consequences for Palestinian communities.* As highlighted in the last report to the AHLC, in western Bethlehem over 4,000 dunums of land were declared as “state land” by the Israeli authorities in August 2014. Since then, residents of the village of Wadi Fukin, which had over half of its land (1,500 dunums) declared “state land”, have been facing major challenges in sustaining their traditional livelihoods of agriculture and grazing livestock. Residents of nearby Jaba, Nahhalin and, to a lesser extent, Surif and Hasan are similarly affected. These communities, as well as all major Palestinian cities, are now unable to expand to meet their growing needs. They continue to face harassment from Israeli settlers who use their private land, including springs, for recreation purposes under the protection of Israeli forces; and they have also been subjected to Israeli military training exercises in their area. Overall during the reporting period there has been a 25 per cent decrease in the number of settler attacks against Palestinians across the West Bank, compared to the previous six months (128 incidents, compared to 171).
38. *The reinstatement, after a decade, of the Government of Israel’s policy of punitive house demolitions is worrisome.* Between 1 June and 30 November 2014, Israeli authorities demolished or sealed five homes, displacing 34 Palestinians, including 16 children. This policy had been effectively suspended in 2005. As the United Nations has already outlined, punitive demolitions are a form of collective penalty that punishes people for acts they did not commit. They contravene international law and risk undermining the already fragile situation.

West Bank – Movement and Access

39. *Although active Barrier construction was been minimal during the reporting period, the finished segments have grave implications for Palestinians and the viability of a Palestinian state.* As of end December 2014, 64.2 per cent (456km) of the Barrier had

been completed and 7.8 per cent (55.1km) was under construction.^{xvi} The Barrier and its associated regime of permits and gates is the primary obstacle to the free movement of Palestinians within the West Bank. 150 Palestinian communities are severely affected as they have land located between the Barrier and the Green Line^{xvii}. As per the 2004 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the section of the Barrier that runs within the West Bank (currently approximately 85 per cent) is illegal and must be removed.

40. *There have been some easings in restrictions on movement from the West Bank to Israel.* On 17 March 2015 the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) announced that Palestinian men over the age of 55 and women over 50 will no longer require a permit to enter Israel and the minimum age for a work permit has been lowered from 24 to 22. This comes in the context of data published by the Bank of Israel which found that the number of Palestinians from the West Bank working in the Israeli economy has doubled during the past four years, reaching around 92,000 in 2014, 59,000 of them holding work permits. However, fundamentally, the system of administrative and physical barriers (currently totalling 490 separate physical barriers) across the whole of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continues to impede free movement for Palestinians, impacting the full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

West Bank - Area C

41. *Area C is fundamental to the contiguity of the West Bank and the viability of Palestine and its economy.* It is essential for the expansion of public infrastructure, such as transportation, water and electricity networks, wastewater treatment plants and landfills, private sector development, and the development needs of communities in Areas A and B. Despite some progress, this potential remains largely untapped due to the on-going administrative and security control of the area by the Israeli authorities, including the complex planning and zoning restrictions they apply and related settlement expansion.
42. *The process for approval of outline plans in Area C remains slow, impeding development and placing homes, infrastructure works and even small-scale agricultural activity at risk of demolition.* Currently only three community-driven outline plans for four communities out of a total of 99 outline plans (some of which were submitted in 2010) covering 113 communities have been approved by the ICA: the remaining communities are in a desperate situation, unable to address their acute housing and service needs without fear of demolition, displacement or other action by the Israeli authorities.^{xviii} In the absence of approved outline plans, and in the context of what the Secretary General has described as “discriminatory and unlawful planning policies, laws and practices”,^{xix} many residents in Area C are forced to build new or expand existing homes or other structures without permits, with a high risk that they will be demolished by the Israeli authorities. Effective and efficient urban and regional planning is essential if sustainable development is to be realized.
43. In 2014, although there was a slight decrease in the number of structures demolished (601, compared to 663 in 2013), there was a 20 per cent increase in the number of people displaced as a result (969, compared to 805 in 2013).^{xx} So far in 2015, 207 structures have been demolished, affecting 781 people, of whom 252 were displaced (this includes 140 children)^{xxi}. Targeting of donor-funded humanitarian assistance also continued, with 60 such structures demolished or dismantled during the reporting period.^{xxii} The recent approval of a Master Plan for Wadi An Nis in Bethlehem by the ICA

is positive progress: it paves the way for local level planning and construction of housing and basic infrastructure necessary for this local Palestinian community. However, the Government of Israel is urged to expedite approvals for the 96 outstanding outline plans, enabling community-led planning processes that are essential for the demographic and economic growth of these communities, and to halt demolitions of Palestinians homes and other structures built without permits, until such time as appropriate outline plans are approved and implemented.

45. *The United Nations continues to support local Palestinian authorities in developing adequate social infrastructure in Area C but the programme faces challenges due to the slow pace of Israeli approvals.* The United Nations continues to support the construction and expansion of 15 schools and health centres in Area C, valued at approximately \$5 million. As reported previously, a package of agriculture-related works, valued at approximately \$5 million, to be implemented by the United Nations with financial support from the British and Dutch governments, was not approved within the agreed timelines and, as a result, part of the funding has now been withdrawn.^{xxiii}
46. *Palestinian access to land and other natural resources in Area C is fundamental to address the development needs of communities across the West Bank and to facilitate Palestinian private sector investment and overall economic growth.* Palestinian private sector investment is stymied by Israeli planning restrictions in Area C as evidenced by the case of the Rawabi housing project. Implementation of this \$850 million private sector-funded housing project, which is located in Area A, continues to be hindered by lack of connectivity to water sources through Area C due to Israeli restrictions. The Israeli authorities have recently approved a temporary water pipeline from Um Safa through Area C to Rawabi, allowing the first group of new residents to move in. The Government of Israel is encouraged to approve the construction of the long-term water pipeline for the city to enable its full development as soon as approval.^{xxiv} Similarly, the Israeli authorities are urged to enable the local authorities to proceed with construction of a solid waste recycling plant in Deir Sharaf to the west of Nablus, which, when constructed, will bring important economic and environmental benefits, including energy production and job creation for the wider northern West Bank.^{xxv}
47. *The United Nations remains concerned about the recent moves to relocate Bedouin communities near Abu Nwar in the politically sensitive E1 area of the West Bank that may be linked to further settlement construction.* Around 7,000 Bedouin and herders (70 per cent of whom are refugees) in Area C are at acute risk due to Israeli government plans to “relocate” them to three large sites.^{xxvi} In December 2014 the period allocated by the ICA for filing objections to outline plans for the establishment of the main site, An Nuwei’ma, expired and the plans are now awaiting final endorsement. The communities have not been adequately consulted on the plans, which they oppose. In mid-March 2015 media reports confirmed that the ICA appointed a retired IDF Brigadier General to lead a mediation effort aimed at reaching a compromise between the Bedouin communities and the Israeli government. The Secretary-General has stated that the implementation of the proposed plan may amount to individual and mass forcible transfers and forced evictions, prohibited under international humanitarian and human rights law.^{xxvii}

West Bank - East Jerusalem

50. *The situation in occupied East Jerusalem continued to deteriorate, revealing the extent of the frustration that grips the Palestinian population after almost 50 years of occupation and underscoring the imperative for re-invigorated involvement of the*

international community. Almost daily demonstrations and clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces occurred across the Jerusalem governorate in October and November – most were fuelled by developments relating to access to the Haram al Sharif/Temple Mount, particularly following the one-day closure of the compound on 31 October (the first time this has occurred since 2000).^{xxviii} Tensions began to calm after separate meetings were held in Amman in November between President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu with King Abdullah of Jordan and US Secretary of State Kerry, where they established confidence-building measures and firm commitments to maintain the status quo regarding the holy sites. In November alone, 800 Palestinians were injured in demonstrations and related clashes with Israeli forces.^{xxx} There has also been an increase in search and arrest operations by Israeli forces in Jerusalem, resulting in 1305 arrests and 880 injuries from October 2014 to March 2015. A series of attacks by Palestinians against Israelis at bus and trams stops resulted in deaths of [three] Israelis, with many more injured. The United Nations welcomes the provision of permits for 200 Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to travel to Jerusalem to access the Haram Al Sharif on Fridays^{xxxi}. It is hoped that this step will herald a broader relaxation of the restrictions on movement and access.

51. *The increasingly religious nature of violence in Jerusalem and parts of the West Bank is particularly alarming.* In the context of the increasing tensions in East Jerusalem, a series of targeted attacks on places of worship and other religious sites were recorded during the reporting period. In the most serious incident, on 18 November, two Palestinians killed five Israelis and injured several others at a West Jerusalem synagogue, before being shot dead by Israeli police. In addition, on 14 October a mosque was subject to an arson attack in the village of Akraba; on 29 November, a Jewish-Arab school was set on fire and vandalised with anti-Arab graffiti; on 24 February, a Jewish cemetery in East Jerusalem was the subject of an arson attack; in two separate attacks on 25 February, a Greek Orthodox Church in East Jerusalem and a Mosque in Bethlehem were set on fire^{xxxii}; and on 6 March the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives was desecrated. The Secretary-General has unequivocally condemned attacks on religious sites and places of worship.^{xxxiii}
52. *Against the backdrop of rising tensions and increasing violence, the nearly 300,000 Palestinians resident in occupied East Jerusalem continue to face long-standing obstacles to their access to housing.* The long-standing restrictions make it almost impossible for many Palestinians in East Jerusalem to obtain building permits, thereby compelling them to construct or expand their homes without authorisation and risking demolition and displacement. Between the beginning of October 2014 and the end of March 2015, 73 structures were demolished by the Israeli authorities in this context, affecting 347 people, including 161 children. This represents a three-fold increase compared to the previous six months (22 structures demolished, 101 affected, including 48 children). The Israeli authorities are urged to ensure planning for East Jerusalem is participatory and takes full account of natural growth and the development needs of the resident population.
53. *There are also continuing challenges in accessing health facilities in the city.* In 2014, 230,712 Palestinians applied through the Palestinian District Coordination offices for permits to access Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank for health-related reasons: 77.36 per cent were approved but 22.63 per cent were denied or had received no answer, effectively meaning that 52,210 people were unable to travel to receive the healthcare they needed.^{xxxiv} Long-term permits are required for staff and patients of the six East Jerusalem hospitals to enable appropriate access to health services. In 2014, 30 of the medical staff who applied received only three month permits and eight were

denied. Since the East Jerusalem hospitals are also education centres in this sector for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, restrictions on access to these facilities are a major barrier to learning^{xxxv}. Israeli authorities permitted the entry of up to 100 doctors and medical teams in Palestinian vehicles. To date 58 such permits have been made use of.^{xxxvi}

54. *Access to and quality of education for Palestinians is of continuing concern.* In February 2011, the Supreme Court of Israel, in response to a petition by the Association of Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), ruled that the shortage of classrooms at that time constituted “a violation of the constitutional right to education of the children of East Jerusalem” and set a five year deadline for the Jerusalem Municipality and Ministry of Education to address the matter.^{xxxvii} According to its 2014 annual survey, Ir Amin, estimates that 3,055 new classrooms are still required to reduce overcrowding and that despite some progress by the Municipality, the pace of construction is simply not keeping up with demand.^{xxxviii} Zoning and other planning restrictions in East Jerusalem inhibit both new construction and the expansion of existing buildings, many of which are generally substandard or unsuitable for educational purposes. The Government of Israel’s efforts to expedite the approval process for expansion of recognised but unofficial schools is a welcome step forward but with the five year deadline set by the Supreme Court fast approaching, further action is required to fully address the educational needs of children in East Jerusalem. Additionally, in 2014 there was a four-fold increase in the number of students affected by education-related attacks and other incidents in the city, when compared with 2013 (8,547 students, compared with 1,492).^{xi}
55. *The Municipal authorities have increased pressure on Palestinian schools in the city to use the Israeli, rather than the Palestinian curriculum.* In January 2015, headmasters of Palestinian public and Israeli-funded private schools (approximately 80 per cent of Palestinian schools in East Jerusalem) were informed by the Department’s Director that they would no longer be permitted to use school books issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Education, and that only text books provided by the Municipality can be used.^{xli} Palestinian Authority-issued schoolbooks have been used in East Jerusalem schools in line with the Oslo Agreements. They were first censored in 2011, when the Israeli authorities covered up sections dealing with Palestinian geography, history and identity, Islam, the Israeli occupation and settlements, the intifada and Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.

Gaza Strip

56. *The ceasefire that brought an end to the hostilities between Israel and Palestinian armed groups on 26 August 2014 is perilously fragile.* Both parties have violated the ceasefire in recent months, with Palestinian armed groups test-firing 151 rockets at the sea, with 13 also launched ineffectively towards Israel, and two air-strikes conducted by Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip since the 26 August 2014 ceasefire. Israeli forces have also conducted limited ground incursions and several Palestinians have been detained by Israeli forces after reportedly attempting to enter Israel illegally. Whilst there has been some progress on movement and access to and from Israel and the West Bank as outlined below, the proposed extension of fishing limits has not been implemented fully, with a number of reported incidents of Israeli naval forces opening fire on fisherfolk located less than six nautical miles from the shoreline.^{xlii} In February 2015, the IDF released a video, which it claimed shows the interception and arrest of Palestinians attempting to smuggle material for rocket production into Gaza by boat. Both parties

are urged to show maximum restraint and ensure compliance with their obligations under the agreement.

57. *There are serious concerns that the governance crisis, together with the slow pace of reconstruction, is fuelling a breakdown in law and order in Gaza.* In recent months, multiple explosions related to suspected intra-Palestinian factional violence rocked Gaza. Anecdotal evidence suggests that crime is rising, with an increase in shootings, theft and car crime and many Palestinians becoming increasingly desperate.^{xliii} Such frustrations might contribute to increased radicalization, particularly among youth, in a troubled and volatile regional context. Since the beginning of 2015, there have been a series of attacks on the international community, including two on the French Cultural Centre in Gaza city. In this regard, incitement against the United Nations is particularly alarming, manifested in demonstrations against the United Nations following its suspension of rental assistance programmes to some refugees due to budget shortfalls. In the most serious incident to date, a demonstration outside a United Nations compound in Gaza city on 28 January 2015 became violent and demonstrators forced their way into the compound. Pending transfer of full security control to the GNC, Hamas is responsible for law and order in Gaza, including the safety and security of United Nations personnel and premises there.
58. *Eight months on from the ceasefire, the pace of reconstruction remains wholly inadequate.* As of end April, reconstruction of 19,000 housing units that had been totally destroyed or severely damaged in the hostilities had yet to start, unnecessarily prolonging the hardship of some 100,000 internally displaced people. Approximately 5,600 people are still living in nine collective centres run by the United Nations in its schools. Work on rebuilding the medical facilities that were destroyed, including the main rehabilitation hospital, Al Wafa, has not begun; and many of the 281 schools damaged have yet to be repaired. Electricity, water and sanitation systems have been improved but remain below previous levels of function. As of mid-April 2015, \$941 million had been received for the overall reconstruction effort representing 26.8 per cent of the amount pledged in Cairo in October 2014 for 2014-17.^{xliv} However, despite this generosity, funding provided is not keeping pace with demands and implementation of the National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan (NERRP), which estimated costs of work at \$4 billion.^{xlv}
59. *Gaza's children are still living with the physical and psychological consequences of the devastating hostilities.* Hundreds of thousands are living with their family home destroyed or damaged, their neighbourhoods in ruins, their families dispersed and relatives and friends killed or injured. The slow pace of reconstruction has made it difficult to re-establish a sense of normalcy for these children. Death, injury, bereavement, displacement and physical destruction have increased feelings of isolation, marginalization, and desperation, which have been compounded by the lack of employment opportunities for young people. At least 400,000 children are in need of immediate psychological support and while the longer-term psychological impact on this generation (which has witnessed three rounds of increasingly violent hostilities in six years) is difficult to fully assess, it will inevitably have implications for the development of Palestinian society as a whole. Any return to conflict will again impose an unacceptable cost on Israeli and Palestinian children.
60. *The hostilities in 2014 had a devastating impact on an already weak economy, with recovery expected to take decades.* Damages to infrastructure, homes, commercial structures, etc. are estimated at \$1.351 billion and related economic losses at \$1.695 billion amounting to a total direct cost of the hostilities of \$3.045 billion.^{xlvi} An estimated 1,000 small factories and workshops and over 4,100 establishments in the retail,

wholesale, restaurant and hotel industries were destroyed or damaged, 30 per cent (over 17,000 hectares) of cultivated agricultural land was severely damaged and 40 per cent of livestock were killed or died as a result of lack of care during the fighting. Value-added losses have continued in the post-conflict period with an estimated US\$80 million lost in economic output in the period September 2014 to February 2015.^{xlvii}

61. *The United Nations ultimate objective in Gaza is to see the lifting of all closures within the framework of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).* In the absence of such a change, the temporary GRM is the only currently available option to facilitate the entry of material and to enable the implementation of large-scale projects that can bring reconstruction, jobs and stability. This Palestinian government-owned mechanism is focused on facilitating both the repair of damaged homes and properties as well as the range of infrastructure and construction works, funded both by the public and private sectors. After a slow start, the GRM has rapidly scaled up. As of 20 May, assessments for the repair of 94,926 damaged housing units assessed by the United Nations have been submitted through the GRM for processing to receive construction material and 84,865 of the households have now procured the materials necessary to repair their homes.^{xlviii} In addition, the private sector and the international community have submitted plans for 168 infrastructure and construction projects, including hospitals, schools, housing projects, service infrastructure and roads. Of these, 85 projects are approved and eight are ongoing. The UN Materials Monitoring Unit (MMU) is fully operational with almost 100 staff in place to monitor throughout the length of the process of approvals, transfer of items and end use of materials and suppliers. The process has not been without challenges, however, including the necessity of the GNC to facilitate the upscaling of the private sector involvement in the GRM and reconstruction of Gaza, as vendors, contractors and investors. Ensuring sufficient capacity at crossings is an additional enabler for reconstruction. In that regard, we are encouraged by the upgrading of the Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings to handle 800 trucks per day and plans to further raise capacity to 1,000 trucks per day.
62. *Despite the challenges, some reconstruction progress has been possible.* Under the NERRP, to date, a total of \$9 million has been disbursed to 3,200 micro-enterprises who had sustained damages of less than \$6,800 – reaching 80 per cent of the total number of enterprises which sustained damage; \$10 million has been released to purchase fuel for the Gaza Power Plant (GPP), approximately 80 per cent of damage to the 22kv and 0.4KV electricity network has been repaired and two power transformers in Rafah and Khan Younis have been installed; 10km of sewage network has been repaired and repairs to eight pumping stations and rehabilitation of three treatment plants is underway; repairs to 19km of the water network have been completed with repairs to damaged wells and reservoirs underway.
63. *The UN and NGO partners are continuing to provide support to those most in need.*^{xlix} However, this vital work is at serious risk because funding is not keeping up with demand. As at 23 April, due to lack of funding, the United Nations has not been able to provide the transitional rental subsidy for the period September to December 2014 for 685 refugee families; 9,000 refugee families are waiting for the first quarter of 2015 payment; 7,400 families have not received their \$500 reintegration grant; and over 62,500 families are awaiting assistance to commence with minor repairs to their damaged shelter. Similarly, the United Nations has been unable to proceed with rehabilitation of 26,320 partially damaged homes or support recovery of economic assets for private sector enterprises due to a funding shortfall of approximately \$272 million. More concerning is the total lack of funding for UNRWA, UNDP and UNOPS programmes for reconstruction of totally destroyed homes, some 20,000 housing units.

In the food security sector, funding is currently only sufficient to continue the food pipeline to 1.3 million people in Gaza until June. The continued lack of funding raises serious concerns about the United Nations ability to deliver to people most in need. The United Nations and its partners has proven in crisis after crisis in Gaza that its assistance and services are an important stabilising factor. Addressing this major shortfall in funding, particular for re-building of destroyed homes, is essential to enable a greater degree of stability in Gaza.

64. *Due to continued closure and related restrictions on free movement, intensified since June 2007, Gaza has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world. Unemployment has risen still further as a direct result of the 2014 hostilities.¹ A large proportion of Gaza's population lost productive assets in the hostilities. The United Nations estimates that an additional 17,200 people are unemployed as a direct result of the hostilities.ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Immediately prior to the hostilities, unemployment rates had risen significantly, primarily due to the collapse of the construction sector and other industries following the closure of the illegal tunnels between Gaza and Egypt and on-going restrictions on free movement of people and goods through legitimate crossing points.*
65. *Addressing chronic unemployment requires moving beyond short-term cash-for-work programmes towards a more comprehensive strategy. Taking the opportunities presented in the post-hostilities period, job creation and employment should be mainstreamed in the GNC's recovery and reconstruction effort as part of a longer-term strategy that combines short-term humanitarian interventions such as cash-for-work and recovery of enterprises, with longer-term job creation and investment in skills development.^{liii} Moreover, greater emphasis is needed on local economic development opportunities to create income and employment generation schemes while encouraging investment. Ensuring a coherent, coordinated response to the unemployment situation will also be essential to addressing the immediate and longer-term challenges. However, only a full and sustained lifting of the restrictions on free movement of people and goods will ultimately address Gaza's chronic unemployment.*
66. *The dire economic situation is also compounding food insecurity; many families who were affected by the hostilities simply cannot afford to buy enough food. A rapid assessment conducted in September 2014 by the Food Security Sector^{liv} found that food availability and food prices had quickly returned to levels similar to those prior to the hostilities primarily due to increased imports by the private sector and the United Nations, and by the partial resumption of local food production. Gaza was previously almost self-sufficient in vegetable production. However, the damage to farms, crops and processing facilities during the hostilities has resulted in major shortages, with the agricultural sector unable to meet local demand for staple fresh vegetables for the first time in 20 years. The assessment found that food insecurity has increased, with those households whose homes or productive assets were damaged or destroyed and/or those who lost jobs as a result of the hostilities unable to afford the food they need. On-going non-payment of civil servants salaries is also affecting access to food for them and their families. Despite their high levels of resilience, the hostilities created additional major shocks for the people of Gaza and exhausted coping capacities that had already been weakened by previous rounds of hostilities, the on-going closure and political instability. Continued support, including moving from food assistance to livelihood and other support, will remain essential to ensure that tens of thousands of families can access the food they need.*
67. *There has been some progress in the easing of restrictions on exports and transfers but this must be expanded and sustained to ensure tangible economic impact. In recent*

months, the Israeli authorities have approved export of some Gazan products including eggplants and tomatoes, to Israeli markets for the first time since 2007. There has also been a significant increase in the volume of transfers permitted to exit Gaza for the West Bank, with the average weekly transfers of goods from Gaza to the West Bank increasing from 2 in 2014 to 14 so far in 2015.^{lv} Overall, from October 2014 to April 2015 3,900 tons of goods left Gaza as exports to Israel and abroad as well as commercial transfers to the West Bank, a 680 per cent increase on the same period in the preceding year.^{lvi}

68. *Despite some positive developments in recent months, restrictions on movement and access of people across Erez have continued, compounding the challenges faced in the aftermath of hostilities.* The United Nations welcomes the recent relaxation of criteria for movement of persons across Erez, within the existing categories,^{lvii} which has resulted in a significant increase in the number of people travelling out of Gaza (60,998 people exited Gaza via Erez between beginning October 2014 and end March 2015, as compared to 32,827 exiting between beginning March and end September 2014). However, the number of Palestinians from Gaza travelling to the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remains far below average figures in 2000, after which restrictions gradually intensified, including the imposition of the closure in mid-2007.^{lviii} In the short-term, these restrictions have serious consequences, particularly in respect of access to healthcare. In 2014, 33 per cent more requests than in 2013 were made for permits for patients from Gaza to cross Erez to seek healthcare services in the West Bank and/or Israel due to the lack of adequate services inside Gaza but there was a 6.1 per cent increase in the percentage of those requests which were denied.^{lix} In the long-term, continued restrictions on freedom of movement have reduced educational and economic opportunities, contributing to high unemployment and resulting in social damage.^{lx} The on-going denial of freedom of movement is in contravention of international law and the Secretary-General has repeatedly called for a full lifting of these restrictions, in line with Security Council Resolution 1860 (2009).
69. *The impact of restrictions on movement via Erez has been compounded by the almost continuous closure of the Rafah crossing during the reporting period.* Following two coordinated attacks on Egyptian security personnel in the Sinai on 24 October 2014^{lxi}, Rafah Crossing has been closed for all but 12 days. In the context of movement restrictions through Erez, the closure of Rafah effectively curtails access for Palestinians from Gaza to the outside world. The United Nations has encouraged urged the Government of Egypt to facilitate entry and exit of Palestinians across Rafah, particularly medical and other urgent cases, with due regard for the security situation in the Sinai. Recent incidents of illegal people smuggling between Gaza and Egypt evidence the desperation many Palestinians feel at their lack of free movement.^{lxii}
70. *There has been insufficient progress in addressing the long-term structural problems that were exacerbated by the hostilities.* As highlighted at the Cairo Conference in October 2014, the recovery and reconstruction process presents an opportunity to bring about transformational change in Gaza. To date, however, there has been only limited progress in terms of “building back better”.
- a. *The chronic lack of energy undermines all basic service provision.* The energy and water (wastewater treatment and desalination) sectors represent a fulcrum which makes progress across all sectors possible, including private sector growth. Improvements in these sectors will also have an immediate effect on the civilian population and would help the Gaza Strip increase its self-sufficiency helping to stabilize the overall situation. Annex A of the United Nations’ September report to the AHLC

outlined current gaps in the energy and water sectors along with short, medium and long-term measures to address those gaps. While these would be rolled out over the time periods identified in the paper, the interdependent nature of each element requires that agreement is required on the entire programme identified therein if each individual element is to progress.

- b. *In terms of short-term solutions to increase access to water*, substantial progress has been made with UNICEF support since the August 2014 ceasefire in construction of the largest of three low-volume (STLV) seawater desalination plants identified in the strategy^{xiii} of the Palestinian Water Authority. Of the 20,000m³/d that plant will serve the Khan Younis and Rafah governorates, infrastructure facilities consisting of a 18km long pipeline, 2,000m³ water storage tank, facilities buildings as well as power supply and transmission works, relating to the 6,000m³/d 1st phase of this plant, have now been completed. Full operationalization is expected by the end of 2015. In addition, the approval of a further five million cubic meters (MCM) of water per year are being brought into Gaza through the Nahal Oz pipeline is welcome. This brings the total to 10 MCM.

71. The United Nations has supported the preparation of a Detailed Needs Assessment (DNA) and Recovery Framework for the Gaza Strip in two volumes. Under the Leadership of the Palestinian Government, the European Union, United Nations and World Bank provided technical support to the exercise. The first volume of the DNA provides an executive summary of the damage, economic loss, and human impact assessment of the 2014 conflict. The second volume comprises a thorough analysis of the pre-conflict context, impact, and economic cost of damage and loss in the infrastructure, productive, livelihoods, social development and governance sectors. It also includes sector-specific recovery frameworks with clear priorities and quantified recovery needs. Overall, the assessment identifies \$1.4 billion in damages to structures, assets and contents of buildings; and \$1.7 billion in economic losses, comprising lost revenue and unexpected operational costs. The DNA also details vulnerabilities that present barriers to resilience in each sector and offers a cross-sectoral recovery strategy for Gaza with prioritised interventions to improve social and economic conditions of Palestinian citizens of Gaza. The recovery frameworks identify a total of \$3.8 billion in recovery needs.

Endnotes

ⁱ Reports to the last AHLC meeting in September 2014 highlighted in particular improving revenue performance, including a significant growth in clearance revenues, containment of the wage bill, as well as enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment, production of the second Palestinian National Development Programme, and accession to international treaties. The UN and World Bank had already assessed in 2010 and 2011 that capacities were sufficient for a functioning government of a state. See UNSCO (2011), *Palestinian State-Building: A Decisive Period: Ad Hoc Liaison Committee Meeting*, 11 April; World Bank (2010), *The underpinnings of the future Palestinian state: Sustainable growth and institutions: Economic monitoring report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee*, 21 September; and World Bank (2011), *Sustaining achievements in Palestinian institution-building and economic growth: Economic monitoring report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee*, 18 September.

ⁱⁱ IMF (2015), *Statement at the End of an IMF Mission to the West Bank and Gaza*, Press Release No. 15/24, 29 January.

ⁱⁱⁱ An emergency budget was adopted on 17 March 2015 and ratified by Presidential Decree on 22 March 2015.

^{iv} IMF (2015), *Statement at the End of an IMF Mission to the West Bank and Gaza*, Press Release No. 15/24, 29 January.

^v Using ILO standards. See PCBS (2015), *Labour Force Survey (October- December, 2014) Round (Q4/2014): Press Release on the Labour Force Survey Results*, 12 February.

^{vi} PCBS (2015). *Labour Force Survey (July- September, 2014) Round (Q3/2014): Press Release on the Labour Force Survey Results*, 12 February.

^{vii} PCBS (2015). *Labour Force Survey (July- September, 2014) Round (Q3/2014): Press Release on the Labour Force Survey Results*, 12 February.

^{viii} See World Bank (2014), *Area C and the future Palestinian Economy*, 2 July.

^{ix} The sectors examined by the World Bank are: agriculture, Dead Sea minerals exploitation, stone mining and quarrying, construction, tourism, telecommunications, and cosmetics. See World Bank (2014?), *Area C and the future Palestinian Economy*, 2 July.

^x PCBS (2015), *Labour Force Survey (October- December, 2014) Round (Q4/2014): Press Release on the Labour Force Survey Results*, 12 February.

^{xi} Average daily wages in 2013 were 64.4 NIS in Gaza and 90.2 NIS in the West Bank and 62.8 per cent of workers in the private sector in Gaza were paid less than the minimum wage, compared to 2.9 per cent in the West Bank. See PCBS (2014), *Labour Force Survey (October- December, 2013) Round (Q4/2013): Press Release on the Labour Force Survey Results*, 12 February and PCBS (2015c). *Labour Force Survey (October- December, 2014) Round (Q4/2014): Press Release on the Labour Force Survey Results*, 12 February.

^{xii} In 2014, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in Gaza rose by 2.85 per cent compared to 1.2 per cent in the West Bank. See PCBS (2015), *The Consumer Price Index during 2014*, 14 January.

^{xiii} As outlined in the Strategic Response Plan 2015, "food insecurity in the oPt is essentially a result of lack of economic access to food, originating from insufficient and unstable financial resources, rather than a lack of food available in the markets". See UN OCHA (2015), *2015 Strategic Response Plan: oPt*, 12 February.

^{xiv} The latest comprehensive assessment of food security was published in 2013— see PCBS, WFP, FAO and UNRWA (2013), *Socio-economic and food security survey: West Bank and Gaza Strip 2012*.

^{xv} UN OCHA (2015), *Protection of Civilians Weekly Report: Reporting Period: 21-27 April 2015*.

^{xvi} Figures provided by UN OCHA.

^{xvii} Most Palestinian farmers need special permits to access their farming land in this area, which has been declared a "closed area". For those granted permits, entry to the "closed area" is channelled through some 85 gates designated for agricultural access. Of these only nine open daily; 13 open some day(s) during the week and during the olive season; and the majority (63) only open during the olive season itself.

^{xviii} Figures provided by UN Habitat. The IAB mission has concluded that the planning standards employed by Palestinian communities are technically sound. (See: International Advisory Board (2015), "Spatial Planning in Area C of the Israeli occupied West Bank of the Palestinian territory", available at <http://unhabitat.org/spatial-planning-in-area-c-of-the-israeli-occupied-west-bank-of-the-palestinian-territory/>)

^{xix} UNSG (2014), *Report of the Secretary General, Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan*, A/HRC/25/38, 24 February. Para. 53.

^{xx} UN OCHA (2015), *Fragmented Lives: Humanitarian Overview 2014*, March.

^{xxi} Figures as of 30 April 2015 and provided by UN OCHA.

^{xxii} Figures provided by OCHA and are correct as of 27 April 2015. Structures included 19 residences, 17 animal shelters and 13 latrines and cisterns.

- ^{xxiii} Failure to meet the identified timeline (4-6) months caused the British Government/Department for International Development (DFID) to redirect funds to another country.
- ^{xxiv} The water pipeline in question will connect the main water source, located near the village of Aboud, to the recently constructed water reservoir built to supply Rawabi with an uninterrupted supply of water. *Rawabi Newsletter/Winter Edition 2014*.
- ^{xxv} The Municipality of Nablus proposed the project to be built on land it owns, which is located in Area C. The project includes: 1) establishment of a station to receive and separate solid waste; and 2) instalment of an anaerobic digester for organic compound to produce gas and ultimately energy. When implemented the project is expected to extend the life cycle of Jenin Landfill by an additional six years. The plant will produce 3 MWH3 of electricity, 20 mts/day of paper/plastic and 30 mts/day of compost. The project will create about 150 new jobs and will minimize production of toxic gas.
- ^{xxvi} This figure is based on information on communities targeted by the Government of Israel's plans provided by the Head of COGAT to a Knesset Sub-Committee in April 2014.
- ^{xxvii} UNSG (2012), *Report of the UN Secretary General to the General Assembly, A/67/372*, 14 September. Para. 37 and UNSG (2014?), *Report of the UN Secretary General on Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan*, 25 August 2014, A/69/348. Para. 16.
- ^{xxviii} In recent months there has been an increase in access to the compound by Israeli extreme right religious and nationalist groups. See UNSG (2015?), *Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem: Report of the Secretary General, A/HRC/28/45*, 5 March.
- ^{xxix} The closure of the compound to all visitors was reportedly ordered in the context of an attempt, allegedly by a Palestinian, to kill a right-wing Jewish activist in Jerusalem on 29 October and a subsequent police operation to apprehend the suspect, which ended in the killing of the suspect by Israeli forces.
- ^{xxx} UN OCHA (2015), *Fragmented Lives: Humanitarian Overview 2014*, March.
- ^{xxxi} According to COGAT a total of 4,000 such permits have been issued to date.
- ^{xxxii} UN OCHA (2015), *Protection of Civilians Weekly Report: Reporting Period: 24 February – 2 March 2015*.
- ^{xxxiii} UN (2014), *Read-out of Secretary-General's telephone calls with H.E. Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, and H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine*, 20 November.
- ^{xxxiv} WHO Update: West Bank and Gaza health access for referral patients in 2014 (forthcoming).
- ^{xxxv} A 2014 survey of students and Al Quds Medical School and Makassed Hospital, 50 per cent said they were delayed by or experienced difficulties in passing through checkpoints and seven were denied permits. WHO Update: West Bank and Gaza health access for referral patients in 2014 (forthcoming).
- ^{xxxvi} Information provided by Israeli Ministry of Defence, Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT)
- ^{xxxvii} Ir Amin (2014), *Shortage of Classrooms in East Jerusalem: Annual Survey*, August.
- ^{xxxviii} This total includes: 408 school classrooms, 330 kindergarten classrooms, 681 classrooms needed to replace standard facilities and 1,636 classrooms to accommodate children currently enrolled in unofficial schools due to lack of capacity in official schools.
- ^{xxxix} Ir Amin (2014), *Shortage of Classrooms in East Jerusalem: Annual Survey*, August.
- ^{xl} In 2014, 21 education-related incidents were documented in East Jerusalem. These included instances of Israeli military operations taking place inside or near schools, physical attacks by Israeli settlers against students as well as settlers entering schools to threaten the headmaster, detention of students and teachers on their way to and from school, as well as children losing school time as a result of ISF dosing areas near schools for military exercises or military operations, or causing delays at check-points.
- ^{xli} Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem (2015), *De-Palestinization of Education in occupied East Jerusalem*.
- ^{xlii} On 7 March, a Palestinian fisherman was reportedly shot by Israeli forces in circumstances that are not yet clear. He subsequently died of his injuries.
- ^{xliiii} UNRWA (2015), *Gaza Situation Report 81*, 26 February.
- ^{xliv} Figures from the World Bank - <http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/rebuilding-gaza-donor-pledges#1>
- ^{xlv} The NERRP was launched at the Cairo Conference and aimed to "provide a roadmap through the current humanitarian crisis to long-term development".
- ^{xlvi} Figures from the Detailed Needs Assessment conducted by the GNC.
- ^{xlvii} ILO (2015), *The "disemployment" impact of the 2014 conflict in Gaza: An ILO Damage Assessment and Recovery Strategy*, 24 March, P. 23.
- ^{xlviii} Assessments of shelters damaged during the hostilities are carried out by UNRWA and UNDP. These assessments help to determine the amount of aggregate (A), reinforcing steel bar or "re-bar" (B), and cement (C)

collectively referred to as “ABC” that would be required to rehabilitate a given shelter. After being processed through the GRM, these assessments enable homeowners to purchase the required materials from participating vendors.

^{xlix} As of end April, UNDP and its partners had deared 170,000 tons of rubble. In addition, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) conducted 303 Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) assessments, enabling repair and reconstruction of residential and other civilian infrastructure to begin. Over 14,400 families whose homes were rendered uninhabitable have received rental allowance/transitional shelter assistance for four to 12 months; and cash assistance for repairs has been provided to 70,000 families whose homes were partially damaged. A massive Back-to-School programme, coordinated by the Ministry of Education, United Nations and Education cluster partners, eased the return to learning for 230,000 of Gaza’s children, with a delay of only three weeks from the scheduled start of the school year. Repairs to 26 damaged government schools have been completed, with funding for another 36 schools, 10 universities and five training centres damaged in the hostilities secured. Critical supplies were provided to government schools, including clean drinking water for over 78,000 children and teachers, school bags and stationary kits to all 130,000 children in grades 1-9 in public schools, shoes and uniforms to particularly vulnerable children and teaching aids and recreational kits to all 395 government schools. Recognizing the need to provide psychosocial support for children in the aftermath of the hostilities, appropriate training was given for over 12,000 school staff and the first week of the new school year was dedicated to structured psychosocial support and recreational activities. Tenders for the rehabilitation of the water network in Beit Hanoun, which covers 40,000 residents, have been issued and design and procurement is underway. Around 4,000 herders have been assisted with replacement or rehabilitation of production assets, and assistance has been provided to hundreds of farmers and cooperatives to facilitate rehabilitation of agricultural assets and items necessary for food production.

^l As at 2012, Gaza was ranked as joint top of global unemployment rates per country/territory (31% unemployment). See ILO (2015), *The “disemployment” impact of the 2014 conflict in Gaza: An ILO Damage Assessment and Recovery Strategy*, 24 March, P. 6.

^{li} ILO defines “disemployment” as “temporary loss of employment caused by the destruction of the land, structures, capital equipment and/or tools normally used by people in the course of their working day”. See ILO (2015), *The “disemployment” impact of the 2014 conflict in Gaza: An ILO Damage Assessment and Recovery Strategy*, 24 March, P. 6.

^{lii} Estimated jobs losses resulting from the hostilities include: 5,600 from agricultural sector; 2,600 from manufacturing; 6,665 from retail, wholesale, hotel and restaurants; and 1,895 from the service sector. For a full breakdown and methodology see ILO (2015), *The “disemployment” impact of the 2014 in Gaza: An ILO Damage Assessment and Recovery Strategy*, 24 March, P. 22.

^{liii} ILO (2015), *The “disemployment” impact of the 2014 conflict in Gaza: An ILO Damage Assessment and Recovery Strategy*, 24 March.

^{liv} Food Security Sector (2014), *Report of the Rapid Qualitative Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) Gaza Strip*, October.

^{lv} This still remains far below the weekly average of 240 truckloads of exports and transfers leaving the Gaza Strip in January to May 2007, prior to the implementation of the closure.

^{lvi} Imports to Gaza from Israel also increased from October 2014 to May 2015 - a total of 1.3 million tons of commercial and humanitarian goods, but excluding fuel supplies, entered the Gaza Strip from Israel via the Kerem Shalom crossing. This is almost double the 730,000 tons that crossed in the same period in the preceding year.

^{lvii} Easings have included raising the age of accompanying children and classifying grandparents as “first degree” relatives. The quota for merchants has also doubled.

^{lviii} In the first half of 2000, prior to the beginning of the second Intifada, an estimated 26,000 people crossed through Erez from Gaza to Israel on average each day. See UN OCHA (2013), *The Gaza Strip: the humanitarian impact of movement restrictions on people and goods*, July.

^{lix} 17.4 per cent of requests were denied in 2014, compared to 11.3 per cent in 2013. See WHO (2015), *Update: West Bank and Gaza Health Access for Referral Patients in 2014*.

^{lx} See Gisha (2015), *A costly divide: economic repercussions of separating Gaza and the West Bank*, February.

^{lxi} According to media reports, the attacks reportedly left 33 security personnel dead and prompted the Egyptian government to declare a State of Emergency in parts of the northern Sinai. See for example Mohamed, Y (2014), *Attacks in Egypt’s Sinai kill 33 Security Personnel*, Reuters, 24 October.

^{lxii} In October, 68 Palestinians were deported back to Gaza through Rafah after being apprehended in Alexandria by Egyptian security forces while attempting to smuggle themselves to Italy. See UN OCHA (2015), *Monthly Humanitarian Bulletin December 2014*.

^{lxiii} PNA and PWA (2011), *The Comparative Study of Options for an Additional Supply of Water for the Gaza Strip (CSO-G)*, 31 July.