

Annan, European officials agree on need to re-energize Middle East peace process

28 January 2004 – United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and European Union (EU) officials discussed in Brussels today the urgent need to support the Middle East peace process and assist the Palestinian Authority.

Responding to press questions following a meeting with Brian Cowen, the Foreign Minister of Ireland, which currently holds the rotating EU presidency, Mr. Annan said the two had agreed on the importance of re-energizing the peace process.

“We shared our concern about the economic, social and humanitarian situation of the Palestinians and I appealed for additional support for them because I am afraid if this situation continues, we will see real despair and perhaps even partial collapse of the Palestinian Authority,” he said.

Stressing the need to break the impasse and move forward, the Secretary-General said, “Everybody agrees that the solution is land-for-peace and we need to really find a way of bringing the parties to the table so that in the end we can have two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in security.”

He pledged to continue efforts aimed at encouraging the parties to move forward.

Echoing this view, Foreign Minister Cowen said, “We have responsibilities; we need to discharge them and we will work proactively, diplomatically and politically in the coming weeks and months to try and devise a way forward, consistent with the Road Map because of course that is the only means by which a just and comprehensive peace can be obtained.”

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