

**Statement by the United Nations Resident Coordinator,
on behalf of the UN Country Team, on the occasion of International Women's Day**

Saturday, 8 March 2014
Jerusalem

On International Women's Day, the United Nations joins in the celebration of the accomplishments of women across the world and the need to continue working to accelerate efforts towards the full realization of women's rights. On this day, we salute the dedication and contribution of Palestinian women to families and communities, as well as to social, economic and political peace and development. We reiterate our commitment to do all that we can to make their voices heard, their needs addressed, and their rights respected.

Empowerment of Palestinian women is key to building a strong Palestinian society and for the realization of a Palestinian State. We acknowledge the strong commitment of the Palestinian Government towards gender equality and the important progress made over the years towards realizing Millennium Development Goal 3 on Gender Equality, especially in the areas of education and health, paving the way for equal opportunities for women, men, girls and boys.

The first-ever UNDAF 2014-2016 for Palestine provides a new opportunity to further United Nations' support to the Palestinian Government in building gender responsive institutions, via gender mainstreaming as a key strategy towards achieving equality between men and women. The United Nations is concerned about recent reports of increasing incidence of femicide – killings of women and girls – in Palestine. We will continue to support the Government of Palestine's judicial and security institutions to combat all forms of violence against women.

The United Nations also believes that the realization of women's rights and gender equality will not be fully achieved without progress towards sustainable peace. In the last report on the Situation of and Assistance to Palestinian Women, the Secretary-General recalled the negative impact of the occupation and resulting protracted crisis on the lives of Palestinian women and their families, making progress towards the realization of women's rights fragile and prone to regression.

The United Nations re-iterates its vision for a two-state solution and underscores that it is in the fundamental interest of all, that ongoing peace efforts, now at a critical moment, succeed.

In this context, the Secretary-General remains committed to the implementation of UNSCR 1325, notably in bringing women to negotiation tables; ensuring women's participation at all levels of decision-making in conflict resolution and peacebuilding; and protecting the rights of women and girls.

On this day, I join the Secretary-General in his call to work for women's rights, empowerment and gender equality.

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