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FOR THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS**

**REMARKS AT SHARM EL SHEIKH CONFERENCE**

**2 MARCH 2009**

Prime Minister Fayyad,  
Foreign Minister Abhoul Gheit,  
Foreign Minister Store,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. We have heard Prime Minister Fayyad outline the Palestinian Authority's Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan for Gaza. This is an impressive plan, put together in a short time, under complex circumstances.
2. I am pleased that the UN team was able to provide quick and effective support to the Palestinian Authority as it developed the plan, including in providing information for data and damage assessment. We are also working creatively and closely together on implementation, as demonstrated by the PA's support for the implementation of UN projects in Gaza.
3. Indeed, the UN's Flash Appeal, the Palestinian early recovery and reconstruction plan, and the PA's regular budgetary expenditures are necessary and complementary pillars for Gaza's immediate relief, recovery and reconstruction. That is why supporting the PA plan, providing budget support, and assisting the United Nations are parts of a coherent overall response. I hope that all donors, who are displaying so much generosity here today, will make use of the range of mechanisms in place to enable assistance to the people in Gaza, who so desperately need our collective help.
4. We also will work closely with Palestinian organizations such as the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, the Coastal Municipal Water Utility, Gaza's power utility company (GEDCO), and many others who provided vital emergency assistance through the crisis, and can help in Gaza's reconstruction. And there must be greater support for the private sector, which is indispensable for Gaza's long term development, and has suffered so much from the prolonged closure of the Strip.
5. There are more than 20 UN agencies working on the ground as one team. Through my work as the Secretary-General's envoy, and the work of my Deputy -- who serves as UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator -- there is a clear structure of coordination of the UN Country Team on the ground. I commend my UN colleagues in our Agencies, Funds and Programmes, who worked together to provide an effective response to the crisis in desperate and dangerous conditions, as they are working together today in addressing its tragic aftermath.

6. In this regard, you will hear later from my colleagues, UNRWA Commissioner-General Karen Abu Zayd, and UNDP Administrator ad interim Ad Melkert. They will speak respectively on humanitarian and recovery challenges faced by the refugee population, and the UN Development Group's overall approach to supporting early recovery and reconstruction efforts. There is also an update on the Flash Appeal at the information desk in the main lobby.
7. As the United Nations, we have three main concerns as we move ahead with our work.
8. First, we lack a proper ceasefire regime. More than one month after unilateral ceasefires were declared, negotiations have yet to produce a durable ceasefire and violence continues.
9. Second, and most important of all, we need access and open crossings. Staff, material and cash still do not get into Gaza as needed, notwithstanding constant communication and interventions with the Government of Israel. Donors and aid organizations should not have to beg for every truck of pasta or paper. Nor can we accept that a homeowner cannot find a bag of cement to plug a hole in the wall. Access is far from adequate, and much more can and must be done in this regard.
10. Third, we will ensure our operational independence. We have responded clearly and decisively to attempts to interfere with our operations on the ground. We are ensuring the integrity of our operations and proper programme monitoring.
11. We will continue to emphasize the need for all parties to meet their obligations in accordance with international humanitarian law, and to make sure these principles are translated into practice. For that purpose, the Humanitarian Country Team has prepared a framework for the provision of humanitarian assistance in Gaza.
12. If we are to achieve what we want in Gaza, everyone has responsibilities: Israel to allow access; the Palestinians to face realistically and positively the challenges of reconciliation in the process that began last week in Cairo, which we welcome; and the international community to work creatively and with determination to help improve the lives of Gazans and of the Palestinian people as a whole. Doing this effectively, and together, is an indispensable part of our efforts to rebuild Gaza and lay the basis for the long-overdue creation of an independent Palestinian State living side-by-side in peace with Israel.