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**REMARKS TO FIFTH EXTRAORDINARY OIC SUMMIT
ON PALESTINE AND AL-QUDS AL-SHARIF**

Jakarta, 7 March 2016

*As delivered by Mr. Nickolay Mladenov,
United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process*

Your Excellency Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Yiad al Madani

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to convey the greetings of the Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-Moon to this important Extraordinary Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on Palestine and al-Quds Al-Sharif, under the theme: 'United for a Just Solution'.

I would like to thank the President and the people of Indonesia for their extraordinary hospitality and the Secretary General of the OIC for responding to President Mahmoud Abbas's request for this meeting.

The Middle East continues to endure violent upheaval characterised by terror, radicalism and sectarianism that threatens to undermine state legitimacy and reshape the region's geopolitics.

In this changing and unpredictable context, establishing lasting peace and security for Palestine and Israel based on the two-state solution has never been more urgent.

Illegal Israeli settlements keep expanding and chipping away at the viability of a Palestinian state while thousands of Palestinian homes in the West Bank risk demolition because of obstacles that may be legal on paper but are discriminatory in practice. Palestinians – particularly youth – are losing hope. They see the impact of almost fifty years of conflict on the social fabric of their communities; they experience the daily humiliations of the occupation; they resent the fact that leaders have consistently failed to deliver on the promise of achieving statehood; and many feel an overwhelming sense of hopelessness as they see no end in sight of the occupation.

Disillusionment, anger and fear cannot justify terror or violence. The United Nations con-

demns all such acts. Stabbings will not bring about Palestinian statehood just as denying the dignity of Palestinians will not bring about security for Israelis.

The current spiral of violence cannot be reversed by security means alone. It must be addressed at the political level with leaders showing a horizon to their people. It was sparked by a fear among Palestinians that the status quo at the Holy Sites was violated. The Secretary-General welcomes the understandings reached in October 2015 between Israel and Jordan that reduced tensions and strongly encourages their continued implementation. All efforts should be made to ensure the historic status quo is preserved in words and in practice.

Over the past year, the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations, as part of the Middle East Quartet, have stepped up their efforts to break the political impasse. Quartet Envoys travelled to the region to meet with Israeli and Palestinian leaders and consulted with Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia to explore how to preserve the two-state solution and how to create the conditions for the return to meaningful negotiations.

We have collectively called for significant policy shifts by Israel, consistent with prior agreements, which are essential to transforming the current dynamics. We have voiced our serious concern that current trends on the ground – including continued acts of violence against civilians, incitement, ongoing settlement activity, and the high rate of demolitions of Palestinian structures – are dangerously imperilling the viability of a two-state solution.

The United Nations supports all efforts undertaken to advance genuine Palestinian reconciliation on the basis of the PLO principles, democracy and non-violence. The formation of a National Unity Government that abides by the PLO programme and the conduct of long-overdue elections are important elements of this process.

At its meeting last month in Munich, the Foreign Ministers of the United States, Russia, the High Representative of the European Union and the Secretary General of the United Nations decided that the Middle East Quartet is to prepare a report on the situation on the ground, identify the dangers to a two-state solution, and provide recommendations on the way forward. Our goal is to work with key stakeholders, including regional countries and the UN Security Council, to stabilise the situation and to actively support a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The Secretary-General welcomes Indonesia's steadfast commitment to the establishment of a unified and democratic Palestinian state. He strongly appreciates the strengthened cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations in support of the long-denied aspirations of Palestinians to achieve statehood.

The United Nations looks forward to continuing and expanding this cooperation in the cause of advancing the prospects for peace and ultimately establishing a Palestinian state, living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel – a goal that has remained elusive for far too long.