

OFF-THE-CUFF

Secretary-General's remarks to reporters in Gaza after meeting with Ministers of the Government of National Consensus

Gaza City, 14 October 2014

Thank you Deputy Prime Minister, thank you Ministers, it is my great pleasure to see you today. I am very pleased to visit Gaza and be with you, the Ministers of the National Consensus Government. This is my third visit to Gaza. I wanted to visit last July when I was in the region but at that time I was not able because of the continuing violence. But I wanted to send my strong solidarity and support to the people of Palestine.

Before I say a few words, I'd like to take this opportunity to extend my deepest condolences to all those people who lost their lives and also to families who lost their loved ones. I am also expressing my deepest sympathy and best wishes for the recovery of many people who were injured during the conflict.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am here with a very heavy heart. The destruction which I have seen coming here is beyond description. This is much more serious destruction than I saw in 2009 immediately after the violence at that time.

While I stand here with a heavy heart, I am also here with a message of hope to all of you.

As you know I am coming from Cairo having attended the international conference on the reconstruction of Palestine. The international community has shown strong solidarity and support for the people of Palestine, particularly for the reconstruction of Gaza by mobilizing 5.4 billion dollars. You have also sent a strong message to the world by forging the government of national consensus and by convening the first historic meeting of the Unity Government under the leadership of President Abbas and chaired by Prime Minister Hamdullah.

You are building one Palestine which is essential. I know the needs in Gaza are great, indeed massive. I had a very good meeting with President Abbas in Cairo and yesterday I had a good meeting in Ramallah with Prime Minister Hamdullah. By having another meeting with cabinet ministers in Gaza, I am seeing one united Palestinian government. As you know the UN was first in coming and supporting your government of National Consensus on the basis of the PLO commitments. We stand by you. The international community supports your government's efforts to assume the security and governance responsibilities in Gaza. This is a great opportunity to unite the West Bank and Gaza under one Palestinian leadership.

There are three important developments that should facilitate your government performing its functions in Gaza: the recent agreement on intra-Palestinian reconciliation, the second is the tripartite agreement between your Government, the Government of Israel and the UN on a temporary monitoring mechanism for Gaza reconstruction. I am very happy to announce that the first truck

carrying construction materials is coming to Gaza today and also the upcoming humanitarian payment to the de facto civil servants in Gaza. It is essential that these steps fully materialize without delay. The management by the Palestinian Authority of the Gaza crossings will also be crucial, in enabling the flow of construction materials into Gaza and restoring trade between the West Bank and Gaza and people links.

I emphasized in my meetings with the Israelis and Palestinian officials that there is no hope for the long term stability of Gaza without addressing the underlying causes of the conflict. This includes both lifting Gaza's blockade and addressing Israel legitimate security concerns. I am asking the leaders of both parties -- Palestinians and Israelis -- to resume talks to address underlying root causes otherwise it is a matter of time unfortunately that the violence continues. Again I am reaffirming the United Nation's strong solidarity for the cause of the people of Palestine and a better future where everybody's human dignity and political opportunities will be enhanced so that everybody can live in peace and harmony. Thank you.