

**Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General
- on Palestinian Elections**

The Secretary-General welcomes the Presidential decree issued yesterday by President Mahmoud Abbas to hold legislative, presidential and Palestinian National Council elections later this year, beginning in May.

The holding of elections in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza will be a crucial step towards Palestinian unity, giving renewed legitimacy to national institutions, including a democratically elected Parliament and Government in Palestine.

The Secretary-General calls on the Palestinian authorities to facilitate, strengthen and support women's political participation throughout the electoral cycle.

The Secretary-General hopes that the holding of the elections will contribute to restarting a process towards a negotiated two-State solution based on the pre-1967 lines, and in accordance with relevant UN resolutions, bilateral agreements and international law.

The United Nations stands ready to support efforts for the Palestinian people to be able to exercise their democratic rights.

*Stephane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General
New York, 16 January 2021*