

**Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General  
on indirect peace talks between Syria and Israel**

The Secretary-General welcomes today's announcement confirming that Syria and Israel have started indirect peace talks, under the auspices of Turkey, aimed at a comprehensive peace in accordance with the Madrid Conference terms of reference for peace. He commends President [Bashar Al-] Assad and Prime Minister [Ehud] Olmert for taking this important step and thanks Prime Minister [Recep Tayyip] Erdogan for his efforts.

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