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**UN Report
Ad Hoc Liaison Committee Meeting**

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Acronyms

AHLC	Ad Hoc Liaison Committee
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CMWU	Costal Municipal Water Utilities
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CT	Computerized tomography
CTA	Central Treasury Account
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOI	Government of Israel
GSS	General Security Service
HERF	Humanitarian Emergency Response Fund
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDF	Israel Defence Force
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IT	Information Technology
JLC	Joint Liaison Committee
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOH	Ministry of Health
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MTRP	Medium-Term Response Plan
MYR	Mid-Year Review
NIS	New Israeli Shekel
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights
oPt	Occupied Palestinian Territory
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PCHR	Palestinian Centre of Human Rights
PRDP	Palestinian Reform and Development Plan
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNSCO	Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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1. Overview

In May 2008, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) meeting in London underlined the importance of reinvigorating a tri-partite approach to improving the Palestinian economy, institutional capacity and people's livelihoods involving action by the Palestinian Authority (PA), enabling steps by the Government of Israel (GoI), and support from donors. Since then, and despite the persistent humanitarian conditions detailed in this report, the PA has pursued important security and reform efforts. These efforts are the continuation of serious and sustained process of Palestinian self-empowerment. They demonstrate a commendable determination to build the institutions and economy of a future Palestinian State, in conditions of great adversity.

Yet socio-economic conditions have seen little improvement in the West Bank and have further deteriorated in Gaza despite the ceasefire agreement which took effect on 19 June. Overall, unemployment figures remain high, despite a decrease in the West Bank¹ and real GDP growth is projected at about 1 percent in 2008, lower than the 3.5% originally projected in the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP)², and obstacles to movement and access to resources continue to discourage investment and economic growth.

There has been some improvement in tri-partite cooperation amongst the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the international community. Successful cooperation has included the preparation and implementation of the Palestinian Investment Conference in Bethlehem in May; the recently improved security cooperation in the Northern West Bank and the conclusion of an agreement in July to enable the launch of a second Palestinian mobile operator. However, such isolated measures will not build a sustainable Palestinian economy as the foundation for a future independent Palestinian state. Tri-partite cooperation needs to be replicated and applied to other areas such as tourism, trade, health and so on. For Palestinian economic development to occur, there must be a significant reduction in movement and access restrictions and development must be allowed in Area C, which comprises around 60% of the land in the West Bank. To further these goals, the UN would welcome the revitalization of the Joint Liaison Committee (JLC) to rebuild confidence and trust between the parties, and encourage further steps in the ongoing negotiations aimed at achieving a viable and lasting peace agreement.

The Quartet Representative's package of measures announced in May 2008 aims to change the reality on the ground and spur economic growth, ease access and movement restrictions and improve planning and development for Palestinians living in Area C. The three tracks come together in the Northern West Bank where the goal is to support security improvements simultaneously with economic development projects. While progress has been made, in particular in the area of revitalizing economic projects, more remains to be done before the Palestinian people at large can feel a difference in their daily lives.

The Quartet's call in May for a new approach in Gaza has not yet been realized in full. Although the ceasefire has afforded the populations in southern Israel and Gaza greater security, there has been no corresponding improvement in living conditions for the population in Gaza. Imports have slightly increased since the ceasefire, but overall supplies are not sufficient to meet basic needs and the lack of exports continues to gridlock Gaza's economy. The recent deterioration in the provision of health and education services in Gaza caused by Hamas' transfer of public sector employees and strikes in response to that, further contributes to a decline in the well-being of the population in Gaza. Qualified staff must be allowed to continue working to ensure access to affordable, reliable and effectively

¹ PCBS release 15 September 2008: Gaza's unemployment went up from 29.8% in Q1 to 45.5% in Q2 (ILO definition) and from 35.5% in Q1 to 49.1% in Q2 (relaxed definition). Unemployment decreased in the West Bank from 19.0% in Q1 to 16.3% in Q2 (ILO definition) and from 25.7% in Q1 to 23.2% in Q2 (relaxed definition)

² IMF: Macroeconomic and fiscal framework for the West Bank and Gaza: Second Review of Progress, September 2008

managed basic services. The UN stands ready to provide any support needed and is working to identify solutions.

Looking back over the last four months, Prime Minister Fayyad and his government have consistently made a far-reaching effort in Palestinian reform, despite conditions of adversity. Good results have been achieved in the area of security and public financial management as well as in implementing a series of micro-projects, making a difference in the daily lives of Palestinians. The PA has produced a budget circular for 2009, further integrating its budget and planning procedures and providing training to all line ministries and institutions. Despite its efforts, the PA still faces a fiscal deficit of almost USD 400 million for 2008. If the PA is to succeed in providing services and continuing its reform based on the PRDP - in particular in the security sector - it is critical that funding be predictable and sufficient. Financial assistance should be linked to the positive results delivered by the government and not to the outcome of a yet uncertain political process.

However, progress does not hinge only on predictable and increased donor funds and PA reform commitments. These efforts must be matched by a heightened willingness by the Government of Israel to address its security concerns while substantially easing movement restrictions and granting fair access to a range of resources such as transport, employment, water and land. The number of obstacles to movement has in fact increased since the AHLC last met and stands at around 626 across the West Bank, compared to 611 as of April 2008. In addition, UN staff face growing difficulties in accessing areas of the West Bank and moving in and out of Gaza.

This AHLC meeting takes place in a climate of domestic political uncertainty in both Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). It is important that none of these uncertainties deter parties from meeting their commitments and taking concrete action to begin lifting the weight of the occupation and strengthening the Palestinian economy, as well as to ensure reliable and safe basic services and employment for the population in Gaza. Our important development and humanitarian efforts can only fully bear fruit if supported by progress on two key political issues: an Israeli-Palestinian political agreement and Palestinian reconciliation. Ultimately, only a negotiated solution to ending the occupation and realizing the vision of two states living side by side in peace and security can offer a long-term solution to humanitarian issues in the oPt. Gaza and the West Bank must also be peacefully reunited within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority in a manner which allows the peace process to advance.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) provide reports to the AHLC focusing on the economic situation and the fiscal framework. Complementing their analysis, this report details humanitarian developments in the occupied Palestinian territory over the past four months (May - August 2008). Comparative figures refer to the four months prior to the last AHLC meeting, (January-April) unless otherwise stated.³

³ Credit and thanks to OCHA for providing this report with key information on humanitarian affairs in the oPt.

2. Humanitarian Situation

Summary of the humanitarian situation in Gaza

On 19 June, an Egyptian-mediated ceasefire took effect between Hamas in the Gaza Strip and the Government of Israel, significantly decreasing Israeli-Palestinian violence in Gaza and Southern Israel. Notwithstanding this positive development, the movement of goods and people in and out Gaza has not markedly improved. The types and amounts of commodities permitted to enter the strip remain very restricted and fall far below market needs. Fuel imports remain precariously low, with power cuts continuing throughout Gaza and raw and partially treated sewage being discharged daily into the Mediterranean Sea due to fuel shortages. The Erez and Rafah crossings remain inaccessible for the majority of Gaza's population, with limited numbers of medical patients and business people having crossed during the reporting period. There was an outburst of intra-Palestinian violence in July and September 2008 and strikes in the health and education sectors are disrupting critical service delivery to an already suffering population. In addition, the crisis of soaring food prices is severely affecting the livelihoods of the population.

Summary of the humanitarian situation in West Bank

Protection of civilians in the West Bank continued to be challenged during the reporting period. While the number of Palestinian fatalities decreased, there was a sharp rise in the number of those injured by Israeli security forces, with the majority of casualties occurring during anti-Barrier protests. Israeli civilian injuries remained at the same level, while the number of deaths decreased. Internal violence resulted in Palestinian deaths and injuries during the reporting period. Settler attacks against Palestinians and their property increased during the past four months. Demolitions in the West Bank were sharply reduced; however, East Jerusalem saw an increase in demolitions resulting in displacement. Search and detention campaigns continued across the West Bank, as did closure of Hamas-affiliated welfare and educational institutions. Settlement and barrier construction also continued during the reporting period. Israeli authorities implemented a number of changes in the closure regime which improved access in certain areas. Overall, however, Palestinian freedom of movement within the West Bank remains highly constrained. A water crisis emerged during the summer due to the combined effects of a drought and in increase in demand for water during the season.

2.1 Gaza Strip

2.1.1 Decrease in Israeli-Palestinian violence

Following the Egyptian-mediated ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, Israeli-Palestinian violence and casualties decreased significantly. In the two and a half months since the ceasefire, 10 Palestinians were injured and another two killed by the Israel Defence Force (IDF), most of which occurred in areas adjacent to the border with Israel, compared to 277 injuries and 118 fatalities during the same period before the ceasefire. No Israeli was killed or injured in Palestinian attacks launched from Gaza since the ceasefire, compared to 29 injuries and three deaths in the same reporting period before the ceasefire.

There has been discernable restraint and efforts to maintain the ceasefire by both sides. Hamas has attempted to stop the firing of rockets and mortars from the Gaza Strip since the ceasefire. Palestinian militants fired 41 rockets and mortars at Israel during the reporting period, compared to 557 in the previous four months (January-April). Israel responded to these rocket attacks by temporarily closing the crossings but not with military force. The IDF navy patrol continued firing sporadically at Palestinian fishing boats forcing them to return to

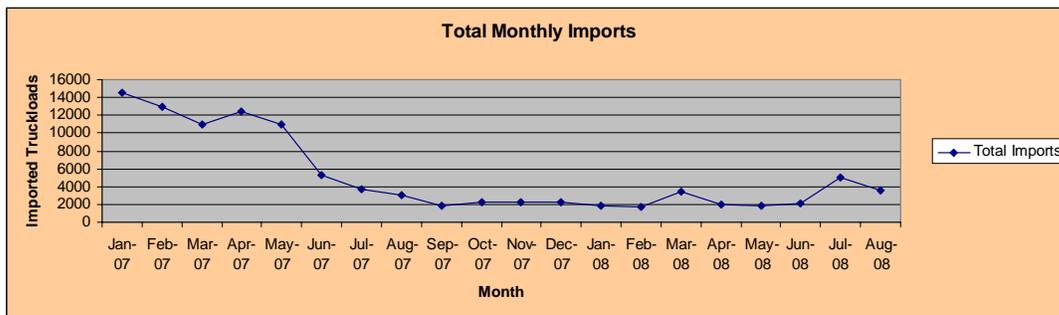
shore. No IDF land incursions or air strikes were recorded since the ceasefire. During the four months reporting period (May-August), Palestinian deaths decreased by 79% and injuries by 78%, compared to the previous four months.

2.1.2 Movement of goods and persons: No significant change

No significant improvement has been observed of movement of people and goods in and out of Gaza since the ceasefire in June 2008. No exports were allowed and approximately 95% of Gaza’s industry remains closed. The amount of commodities allowed into the Gaza Strip initially increased after the ceasefire, but then steadily decreased. Even with the initial increases and the re-opening of the Kerem Shalom crossing in August, the monthly average of imports remained 40% below those recorded in May 2007, just before the Hamas take-over.⁴

Furthermore, the type of commodities allowed in, remained very restricted. Israel continued to exercise full control over the amount and type of commodities allowed entry. A disproportionately large part of the imported commodities were made of food supplies (56% in August), while vital commodities such as raw industrial materials, mechanical spare parts, school uniforms, and stationary were not allowed in sufficient quantities.

The flow of construction materials, crucial for housing, water, waste water and sanitation services and infrastructure continues to be severely restricted. In August, for example, approximately 4776 tonnes of cement were allowed in, 12 % of the levels entering Gaza in May 2007. While a relatively large amount of gravel entered the Strip since the ceasefire much of it cannot be utilized unless a proportionate amount of cement and other related products are allowed entry. If adequate construction material had been allowed into the Gaza Strip, UN projects with an immediate impact would have been able to resume as called for in the May by the Quartet including, for example, an UNRWA project to construct or repair shelters for nearly 38,000 people living in inadequate conditions. Due to the continued lack of raw materials, 3,000 dunums of greenhouses remain abandoned.



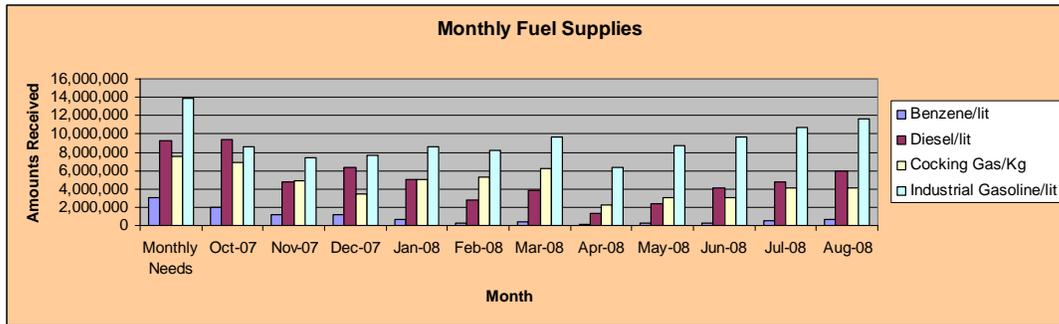
Services disrupted due to fuel shortage

The import of all types of fuel into Gaza has been drastically reduced since October 2007, following a decision adopted by the Government of Israel to declare Gaza a “hostile entity”, thus creating a crisis in the continuous supply of basic services. Despite the increase in the amounts of fuel allowed into the Gaza Strip following the ceasefire, in August 2008, only 22% of petrol, 65% of diesel, 56% of cooking gas and 84% of industrial gas estimated daily needs, were imported. Hamas continued with the coupon rationing system that has been introduced since April 2008, limiting the quantity of fuel families can receive to a minimum, while prioritising remaining industries and public services, including hospitals. Shortage of industrial diesel forced Gaza’s power plant to limit its output to 55-65 MW, well below its

⁴ The level of imports in December 2005 (before the Palestinian elections won by Hamas) is used as a benchmark to calculate needs, except for industrial gas for which the amount required to operate the power plant at full capacity is used.

80MW full capacity. Accordingly, power cuts have continued since the ceasefire for at least four to five hours a day throughout the Strip except in Rafah which is supplied by Egypt.

All services relying on electricity and/or fuel continued to be severely affected. For example, the fuel shortage, in conjunction with the lack of spare parts, is preventing the full functioning of Gaza's three waste water treatment plants. This has forced Gaza's water utility to continue discharging approximately 63,000 m3 of raw and partially treated sewage into the Mediterranean Sea each day.



Limited movement of people in and out of Gaza

Following the ceasefire, a slight increase in the number of people moving in and out of Gaza has been reported. Erez crossing, the only passenger crossing between Gaza and the West Bank (via Israel) continued to be inaccessible for the majority of the population, with only medical patients and some senior Palestinian businessmen allowed to cross. Only about 65% of exit permit applications submitted by patients were approved during the reporting period. The Rafah crossing, which connects Gaza to Egypt, has continued to be largely closed since mid-June 2007. In the four months since May 2008, the crossing was open on 29 days, allowing a monthly average of 1,900 passengers to cross in both directions, compared to 18,500 in May 2007. Most students with fellowships and places to study abroad were unable to leave the Gaza Strip to pursue their higher education or have been seriously delayed.

2.1.3 Intra-Palestinian violence and divisions

A July period of intra-Palestinian violence in Gaza saw a total of 25 people killed and 159 others injured, compared to two deaths and nine injuries during the previous four months. The violence erupted following the 25 July bombing of a beachside restaurant killing a child and five Hamas members, and injuring many others.

Following this incident, Hamas raided approximately 210 community based organisations and NGOs allegedly associated with Fatah, closing down 185 of them and conducting arrests. About 70 of these organisations were later allowed to re-open. These closures have affected an estimated 50,000 Gazans, who were benefiting from social programs such as children's summer games, women's health and income generating activities. The campaign was accompanied by arrests targeting people allegedly associated with Fatah.

At the beginning of the school-year, on 24 August, the Teachers' Union in Ramallah called on teachers in Gaza to strike in protest of the Hamas decision to transfer about 30% of head teachers and around 4000 regular teachers to new schools. In response to the absence of teachers and other staff, Hamas has contracted their own teachers, secretaries and school guards, to replace those on strike.

In a similar move, the dismissal of around 40 health workers by Hamas in August, led the Palestinian Union of Health Professionals in Ramallah to call on members in Gaza to strike starting 30 August. According to WHO, approximately 68% of health workers at surveyed primary health centres adhered to the initial strike call and 35-40% at the surveyed hospitals. As with the teachers, the striking health workers continue to receive their salaries from the PA. Health care provision is affected to varying degrees throughout the Strip and remains a key concern given the already precarious position due to the closures in Gaza.

Palestinian inter-factional violence re-surfaced in September and resulted in the death of 14 people, including one child, and the injury of another 52. Most of the casualties occurred on 15 and 16 September in Gaza City, during armed clashes between security forces and militants affiliated with the Hamas authorities and members of one armed clan, after a member of the clan was held responsible for the killing of a Hamas policeman.⁵

2.1.4 The status of children in Gaza

Fifty-six percent of Gaza's population is younger than 18.⁶ Indicators on child well-being show negative trends⁷: stunting rates amongst children are rising; school enrolment is declining and test results in subjects such as Mathematic, Arabic and English are worrisome.⁸ In July, Hamas closed down nine out of 23 UN supported youth centres offering tuition and recreational activities. As of 20 August, seven centres were re-opened, but confiscated supplies were not returned and learning and recreational opportunities outside of school are no longer available to approximately 2000 adolescents.

Despite the fact that classrooms are severely overcrowded, USD 93 million of UNRWA and other UN-supported building projects including schools remain suspended due to lack of construction materials.⁹ Prices for uniforms and school supplies have increased by 50% - 100% depending on the location as a result of import restrictions.¹⁰

With children's health closely linked to household poverty, a 2008 UN supported rapid assessment in three Gaza districts showed that 2.5% of the surveyed children were underweight and 10.3% were stunted, with 3.4% at risk of dying. The average monthly income for surveyed households was estimated at New Israeli Shekel (NIS) 1,943.7 (US\$570), with 62.6% of the households stating that their income was insufficient to meet their food needs. Previously self-reliant families are increasingly food insecure in Gaza with a 15% elevation in food prices during the first half of 2008 due to a combination of global price hikes and access and movement restrictions.¹¹

The current water supply in Gaza is estimated at 80.5 liters per capita per day – approximately half of the international standard of 150 liters per capita. Water quality continues to deteriorate with water wells pumping brackish water unsuitable for human consumption. In Gaza, around 75% of all water samples fail to meet WHO standards for Nitrate. In impoverished communities with poor sanitary conditions, children naturally face a high risk of water-borne infections.

2.1.5 The status of women in Gaza

The situation of women in Gaza has become more difficult over the past few months. Incidents of domestic and gender-based violence increased. Reasons for the worsening of the situation include the degradation of living conditions and cultural norms which appear to

⁵ UN Security Council Briefing, 18 September, 2008

⁶ Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics, 2007

⁷ Palestinian Health and Family Survey, 2006

⁸ Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics, 2007

⁹ UNRWA report: Prolonged crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory, July 2008.

¹⁰ UNRWA report: Ibid

¹¹ OCHA Humanitarian Monitor, July 2008

increasingly link women to family "honor".¹² Gaza lacks "women's shelters" and its social and protection services specifically targeting women and girls have for the most part been halted.¹³ These types of programs are not typically defined as "humanitarian" interventions and, as such, much of their financial support has declined.

Fuel shortages in the Gaza Strip continue to affect women with particular severity. Without affordable and reliable transportation, shopping and child care tasks force women to walk longer distances with their children, often exposing them to risks on the streets.

The dire economic situation and high levels of unemployment, in particular among previously employed men, continue to compel many women to seek income opportunities through the establishment of small enterprises to support their families. For many, however, these opportunities are out of reach given social stereotypes about women's roles, and persistent pockets of illiteracy or low levels of vocational training in marginalized areas of the Strip.¹⁴

2.1.6 Food security situation in Gaza

Agriculture plays a crucial role as a food security stabilizer and can help alleviate many of the difficulties faced by affected families. Yet the sector is constrained by non-availability or increasing prices of farming inputs and equipment, making investments in agriculture increasingly more difficult. Availability of locally produced fresh foods (meat, poultry, fish and vegetables) is highly limited. In the absence of sustained and reliable import pipelines, Gaza's families face shortages of nutritious food and severe food price inflation. Consequently, many Palestinians are reducing the quantity and quality of food they consume, particularly by cutting down on fresh foods and animal proteins. Early signs of increasing malnutrition have been registered in poor neighborhoods in the Gaza Strip.¹⁵ Palestine refugees, who represent the majority of the population of the Gaza Strip, remain particularly vulnerable, as evidenced by food security data from the recent joint FAO-UNRWA-WFP assessment. Despite unprecedented levels of poverty and unemployment in Gaza, under-funding has prevented UNRWA from increasing the size of the food parcel provided under its emergency program.

2.1.7 Profile: Health sector in Gaza

The delivery and quality of health services in Gaza are being steadily eroded not only by closures, but also by the almost total administrative divide between Gaza and the West Bank which has resulted, among other things, in the recruitment of staff with undetermined competencies. Key factors contributing to the deterioration of the health system include:

- Shortage of fuel and electricity failure

Fuel shortages caused periodic power cuts resulting in disrupted use of medical transport, private vehicles and emergency generators. All five districts experienced daily electricity cuts of five hours often during peak times interrupting x-rays, laboratory examinations, and dental services. Shortages of cooking gas for use in kitchens and laundries led to the temporary closure of these services in Tal Al Sultan, Pediatric and Aqsa hospitals. In addition, around 10 out of the 44 Ministry of Health (MoH) ambulances were not functioning at any given time in the period between May and August, 2008.

¹² Gender equality and women's empowerment in the occupied Palestinian territory, Situation analysis - Violence against women and girls, ILO, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNDP, UNRWA, 2008.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ According to UNDP's Arab Human Development Report (2005) - *Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World* - Palestinian women's participation in the labour market is amongst the lowest globally. Only 15.5% of Palestinian women are active in the labour force (18.4% in the West Bank and 10.2% in Gaza) - the average in the Arab world is 29%.

¹⁵ Joint Rapid Food Security Survey conducted by FAO, WFP and UNRWA (May 2008)

- Shortage of medical equipment and spare parts

There are shortages of medical equipment, a lack of spare parts and poor maintenance in most health facilities for various reasons including the effects of the closure, the collapse of the local market of supplies and maintenance equipment, the difficulty of training maintenance engineers and in bringing in equipment specialists. Computerized Tomography (CT) scanners and blood gas analysis services have been interrupted in all hospitals in Gaza. Laser and cardiac monitors, ventilators and incubators are not functioning in some of the hospitals.¹⁶

- Shortage of medication and medical supplies

During the period May to August, an average of 12% of essential drugs and 20% of essential medical supplies were out of stock (defined as sufficient supplies to last for a maximum of 30 days) due to inadequate needs assessment, uncertain delivery dates from partners and suppliers, and weaknesses in the system for storage, distribution and supply. WHO has been responsible for the delivery of medical supplies for the MoH in Gaza for the past 18 months but, as from 1 September 2008, the MoH in Ramallah has resumed this responsibility and has instituted a new procedure whereby the supplies will be warehoused by the Ministry and then taken to Gaza. There is a risk that these new arrangements could accentuate shortages particularly in the short term.

- Public Health Risks

Tests on sea water samples collected in June revealed contamination in 11 areas, seven of which are public beaches. The consumption of contaminated seafood, particularly raw fish and shellfish present another health hazard and increase the risk of eye, ear and skin infections as well as diarrheal infections.

- Accessibility to Health Facilities Outside Gaza

The number of patients requesting permits to be treated outside Gaza increased from an average number of 734 in 2007 to 1,039 per month in the first half of 2008. At the same time the proportion of patients granted permits has declined substantially. 6,704 patients applied for permits in the first 6 months of 2008 and only 65.3% of the applications were actually granted. That compares with 82% of applications which were granted permits in 2007 and 90% of applications in 2006. These are patients who require medical treatment which is not available in Gaza. Many of them have life threatening conditions requiring urgent care, such as cancer and heart disease. During the period from 1 October 2007 to 30 June 2008, WHO confirmed the death of 44 patients waiting to exit Gaza to reach health services not available in Gaza.

- Health Infra-structure

Hospital and primary care building programs essential to meet the demand of a growing population in Gaza continue to be suspended including three large MoH projects: the completion of the specialty surgery building at Shifa Hospital, the addition of two floors on the Aqsa Hospital, and the completion of the Mubarak building at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis. UNRWA has suspended its project to expand four Primary Health Care sub-centers and similarly, some local NGOs have been unable to expand their services due to limited facilities or have expanded by renting other buildings leading to fragmented and sporadic services.

¹⁶ See ICRC report: Medical Equipment Assessment of Surgical Hospitals providing Emergency Surgery in Gaza and West Bank. July 2008

- Professional training and standards

Access to continuing education is increasingly difficult with the inability of medical personnel to leave Gaza or for trainers to enter Gaza. The combination of the inability to improve the physical infrastructure and the lack of standards in medical training only contributes to the further deterioration of the health system in Gaza.

2.2 West Bank

2.2.1 Protection of Civilians

During the reporting period, Palestinian civilians in the West Bank continued to suffer inadequate levels of protection, as provided for under international humanitarian and human rights law. Among others, 353 Palestinians were injured during anti-barrier protests and another 65 as a result of attacks by Israeli settlers; at least 140 were displaced following the demolition of their homes; almost 2,000 have been affected by arbitrary arrests and lack due process; hundreds affected as a result of over 2,000 search raids; and thousands, most of them children, affected by the closure of education and charity institutions reportedly affiliated with Hamas.¹⁷

Injuries increased - fatalities decreased

The total number of Palestinians injured by Israeli security forces increased from 291 to 533 during the reporting period - an increase of 83% - while the number of fatalities decreased from 22 to 12. Four of those killed and 131 of those injured were children. Over 60% of all casualties occurred in Ni'lin village to the west of Ramallah, during demonstrations in response to the construction of a Barrier section on village land and the anticipated isolation of 2,500 dunums of agricultural land. Many of these demonstrations were characterised by the disproportional use of force by the IDF and the Border Police and included the firing tear gas, rubber-coated metal bullets, stun grenades, and occasionally live ammunition at the demonstrators, to prevent them from reaching the construction site. At least nine IDF soldiers and border policemen were injured by stones thrown by demonstrators. Another nine Palestinians were killed and 25 injured as a result of internal Palestinian fighting, compared to 10 and 85 respectively during the previous period, January – April.



The number of Israeli civilians injured by Palestinians during the reporting period stood at 75, exactly the same as in the previous four month while the number of deaths decreased from 14 to six. Three out of the six fatalities and 41 of the injuries were caused by two separate terrorist incidents in West Jerusalem, during which Palestinian bulldozer drivers targeted civilian pedestrians and drivers of other vehicles.

¹⁷ OCHA: Humanitarian Monitor, August 2008, page 4

Settler violence increased

During the reporting period, 131 incidents involving attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians and their property were reported to the UN, compared to 104 in the previous four months. Attacks resulted in the injury of 65 Palestinians; the firing of improvised rockets and home-made shells towards Palestinian villages in the Nablus governorate; setting fire to over 2,500 dunums of agricultural land; and obstructing farmers' access to their land in areas close to settlements. Attendance in the three schools (Al Ibrahimmiyye, Cordoba and Al Fayhaa) closest to the Israeli settlements located in the H2 area of Hebron City has dropped by almost 50% since September 2000. Recent reports in the Israeli media and by Israeli NGOs suggest that as much as 80-90% of the files opened against Israeli settlers following attacks on Palestinians and their property are regularly closed by the Israeli police without prosecution.¹⁸

Demolitions and displacement increased in East Jerusalem, but dropped in the West Bank

In the first quarter of 2008, the demolition of 124 houses resulted in the displacement of 435 Palestinians. Since May 2008, when the Quartet Representative negotiated a moratorium against house demolitions in the West Bank with the Government of Israel, hardly any demolitions have been implemented in the West Bank with the exception of East Jerusalem where 56 buildings belonging to Palestinians were demolished between 1 January and 5 July 2008.¹⁹ However, new demolition orders continue to be issued and orders pending stand at more than 3,000.

Arrests

During the reporting period, the Israeli authorities released 198 Palestinians on 29 August 2008 as a confidence building gesture to President Abbas. At the same time, the Israeli security forces arrested almost 1,400 Palestinians, 18 % less than compared to the previous four months. During this period 471 Palestinians affiliated with Hamas or other factions were arrested by PA security forces, an increase of 37% since the last period.

An average of 730 Palestinians were held in the reporting period in Israeli prisons under administrative detention - that is detention without charge or trial. At the end of August 2008, 13 of the administrative detainees were children. Between January 2008 to July 2008, at any given point in time, between 307 and 337 Palestinian children were being held by the Israeli Prison Service.

Search campaigns and the closure of charities

During the reporting period, the IDF conducted more than 1,900 search raids affecting private homes and public institutions, approximately 100 more than during the previous period (January – April). Some of the searches resulted in extensive property damage and others involved allegations of physical assaults by soldiers. At least 13 welfare and educational institutions, most of them in Hebron and Nablus districts were raided by the IDF during the reporting period due to a reported affiliation with Hamas. Some of them have been ordered closed for three years resulting in the disruption of aid and services to more than 5,000 children. At least another seven such institutions were raided and closed for similar reasons by the PA security forces, mostly in the Hebron governorate.

¹⁸ See Yesh Din, "Law Enforcement upon Israeli Civilians in the OPT", Data Sheet, July 2008. See also the response of the Judea and Samaria Division of the Israeli Police to Yesh Din's report published in Ynet, 9 July 2008, available at www.ynet.co.il.

¹⁹ According to information from the Jerusalem Municipality. Note also additional structures were demolished during the same period by the Israeli Ministry of Interior.

2.2.2 Restrictions on Access and Movement²⁰

During the reporting period, the Government of Israel took several steps aimed at easing internal movement for Palestinians. It removed one staffed checkpoint and eased movement through four routes in the northern West Bank and in Hebron, as detailed below. It also removed around 100 obstacles of which only one quarter were significant and therefore were mapped and recorded by OCHA. These actions are positive and welcomed but they increase movement only in a localized or regional context. In addition, during the reporting period there was a net increase of 2,5% in the total number of internal closure obstacles recorded by OCHA –from 611 at the end of April 2008 to 626 obstacles as of 11 September 2008. Overall, the freedom of movement of Palestinians within the West Bank remained highly constrained and neither territorial contiguity nor the pre-2000 status quo was restored.

Analysis of the GOI improvements:

1. Removal of one staffed checkpoint- Rafat: This checkpoint was established a year and a half ago. Its removal frees travel for over 50,000 Palestinians living in a Barrier enclave to travel to and from Ramallah.
2. Easing:
 1. 'Shavei Shomron' checkpoint: Closed in 2005, it is now open for Palestinian traffic between 6:00 – 18:00 hours. This opening eases travel between the northern West Bank and Ramallah. However, movement towards Nablus is still blocked by other checkpoints. Approximately 330,000 Palestinians from the northern region can benefit from this easing.
 2. Ras a Jora/Halhoul Bridge: Closed for several years by roadblocks, this passage has two gates and an IDF checkpoint and is open for commercial traffic 24 hours/day. This opening, replaces prior easing at - Farsh al Hawa/Yehuda - which is now closed.
 3. 'Al Fahs' (also known as 'Kvasim') junction: An earth mound blocking direct access to Hebron's city industrial area was removed in May 2008, significantly improving commercial and other movement. However, since then two gates have been installed and were used to close the junction for several hours on at least two days during the months of July and August.
 4. Asira A-Shamliya checkpoint: Formerly closed, this checkpoint was opened on 28 April with two gates from 5:00 -23:00. It controls movement between Nablus city and nine villages to the north of the city, improving access for 30,000 people.
 5. Removal of about 100 unstaffed obstacles. In April 2008, the IDF removed 61 obstacles. Between May and September, they removed 39. Of these obstacles, 25 had been mapped by OCHA and found removed. Five obstacles had been mapped by OCHA, but were not removed. The remaining obstacles had not been mapped by OCHA and were insignificant, or had already been removed in the past.

While these steps increase the freedom of movement in a localized or regional context, in order to reduce the overall territorial fragmentation of the West Bank, the multi-layered system of obstacles and restrictions needs to be addressed. This system includes:

626 Obstacles and checkpoints: The total number of obstacles increased by 2.5% from 611 to 626 obstacles, including both staffed checkpoints (eight checkpoints to cross the Barrier to

²⁰ The Israel Security Agency, at its briefing of AHLC members in Jerusalem on 3 September 2008, highlighted that while 53 Israelis were killed by suicide bombers in 2002, in 2008, only one Israeli has been killed, attributing the reduction in part to restrictions in movement

other parts of the West Bank) and physical obstacles (earth mounds, roadblocks, gates and trenches). In addition to this figure, there are 78 permanent obstacles in the Israeli controlled area of Hebron – H-2, which have been in place for several years. Out of these 78 permanent obstacles, 16 are IDF staffed checkpoints.

Of note, during this period, the Israeli authorities started expanding the ‘Wadi Nar’ (container) checkpoint, located on the only north-south route connecting the West Bank, and on the only route leading to Al-Quds university- the largest Palestinian university in the Jerusalem and Ramallah region. Similarly the IDF has announced plans to expand Awarta checkpoint (back to back) for goods at the entrance to Nablus city. While according to the authorities, these expansions will ease movement through the checkpoint, there is a concern that the works will result in a further entrenchment of this restriction on movement.

Flying checkpoints: During the reporting period, the weekly average of random (“flying”) checkpoints increased by 35% (89 vs. 66). These checkpoints often cause more difficulties for Palestinians than a regular checkpoint, since they are unpredictable and usually entail more intensive search procedures.

Banned and restricted roads: The IDF continues to prohibit or severely restrict the use of hundreds of kilometre of roads by Palestinians turning them into almost exclusive Israeli roads. While some of these roads serve as corridors, connecting Israeli settlements to Israel, others such as the Highway 443 are mainly used by Israeli citizens commuting between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

Barrier: Approximately 57% of the Barrier’s final route has been completed with 79% of it running inside the West Bank, separating Palestinians from their land. Nine percent of the Barrier is under construction - almost entirely inside the West Bank. This construction continues despite the 2004 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, which found that the sections of the Barrier running inside the West Bank, together with the associated gate and permit regime, violated Israel’s obligations under international law. There are 56 gates that control Palestinian movement to West Bank areas on both sides of the Barrier. According to a UN survey conducted in 2007,²¹ in the northern West Bank less than 20% of those who used to farm their lands in these areas before completion of the Barrier, are now granted ‘visitor’ permits to cross these gates to reach their farms and wells.²² East Jerusalem is among the areas isolated by the Barrier. Permit holders are only allowed to cross the Barrier into East Jerusalem through four of the 18 existing checkpoints and only by foot.

Permits: Permits are still required for Palestinians to reach East Jerusalem, the Seam Zone (West Bank areas west of the Barrier) and to drive from the West Bank to the Jordan Valley.

Age restrictions: During the reporting period no additional restrictions based on age have been imposed on the population.

Curfews: The number of curfews imposed on Palestinian villages decreased by 37% and the number of curfew hours (duration of all curfews) by 75%.

Settlements: Over 3% of the West Bank territory lies within the outer limits of Israeli settlements and are almost completely inaccessible for Palestinians. The Israeli non governmental group “Peace Now” reported that during the first half of 2008, over 1000 new buildings (2,600 housing units) were under construction in Israeli settlements – almost double the amount during the same period in 2007.²³ On 24 July, approval was given for 20 permanent housing units at Maskiyot in the West Bank, outside the footprint of any existing settlement.

21 OCHA-UNRWA Survey: "The Barrier Gate and Permit Regime Four Years on: Humanitarian Impact in the Northern West Bank", November 2007, http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/OCHA_SpecialFocus_BarrierGates_2007_11.pdf, accessed on August 20, 2008.

22, The Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier, July 2008, Update No. 8.

23 Peace Now report, August 2008

Closed military zones: More than 20% of the West Bank, mostly in the Jordan Valley, were declared closed military zones over time and are officially prohibited for Palestinian entry. Many of these areas have been closed for more than a decade. This affects Bedouin living within these areas, who face demolitions and displacement, alongside herders and Palestinian villages relying on access to these areas for their livelihoods.

2.2.3 Humanitarian Access

In addition to the restrictions detailed above, the ability of UN staff to reach some areas, particularly in East Jerusalem and areas isolated by the Barrier, and deteriorated during the reporting period. A policy to routinely search UN vehicles entering East Jerusalem was introduced, whereas the previous policy had been to do so only in response of a specific security threat. This is contrary to the 1946 UN convention on the privileges and immunities of the UN staff. The Israeli authorities have notified the UN that a new procedure regarding UN supplies will soon be enforced; reducing the number of Barrier crossings through which UN contracted trucks can enter the West Bank from 12 to six. The UN is concerned that the capacity of the remaining crossings will not allow for efficient delivery of humanitarian aid. Perhaps most worrying, the continued insistence that Palestinian staff walk across both Erez and reportedly soon across Barrier crossings raise concerns over the safety of UN staff and operational delays. Mortars are often fired at the Erez crossing and it can take staff members 2-3 hours to cross by foot, leaving them vulnerable and without communication devices in the event of an emergency. UNRWA reports that the average pedestrian crossing time through the Barrier in the West Bank during morning hours is four hours. In addition to the cost of this delay, reports of people injured caused by the congestion at the crossings are being increasingly received.

2.2.4 Water Crisis

During the reporting period a water crisis emerged in the West Bank, due to the combined effect of a drought (55% of the annual average rainfall during the last winter) and the increased demand for water in a hot summer season. The drought, which has caused a premature exhaustion of traditional water sources (cisterns and springs), left around 200 rural communities in the West Bank with an estimated population of 200,000 struggling to meet their basic water needs.

Many of these disconnected communities suffer from a lack of “filling points” in their vicinity while access to existing filling points is hindered by the movement restrictions described above which oblige water tanks to make long detours and raise the prices of tank water. Access difficulties were particularly grave in the Hebron district and some of the worst affected communities are spending as much as 30-40% of their income on tank water to meet domestic and livestock needs. Lack of economic and physical access to safe water is increasingly leading poor families to consume water from unprotected sources, such as agricultural wells, posing serious concerns about water quality and potential public health effects. The current water shortage is also increasing the levels of food insecurity among rural communities, herders in particular, raising the risk of displacement.

2.2.5 Food Security Situation

Similarly to the situation in Gaza Strip, the economic crisis and constraints to movements of goods and people are heavily impacting on access to food in the West Bank, particularly among the urban poor and refugee camp residents. In spite of the relatively high potential for local food production in the West Bank, the food insecurity level has increased to 25% of the West Bank population in 2008. UNRWA faced increasing demands for assistance as rapid price hikes have dramatically reduced the purchasing power of refugee households, large numbers of whom live close to the poverty line.

3. UN Response

3.1 UN Humanitarian Response

As part of the implementation of humanitarian reform in the oPt, the Humanitarian Country Team was established by the Humanitarian Coordinator comprising UN humanitarian agencies, international aid agencies and local NGO's. One of its tasks is to oversee the roll-out of sector clusters which will lead to better coordination and accountability.

During the reporting period the UN humanitarian agencies in the oPt were supported in their work by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) under the leadership of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator. Other UN organizations and programs on the ground provide humanitarian assistance where necessary, but focus on development programs and capacity development. Despite the continuation of some basic service components and food support in the West Bank and Gaza, restrictions on imports resulted in the interruption of some USD157 million in UN and World Bank infrastructure and employment programs in the Gaza Strip.

The largest portion of humanitarian aid is funded through the annual Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), which was launched in January 2008, and was based on a set of strategic priorities collectively identified by the humanitarian community and the PA. While in the original CAP USD 462 million were requested, following the Mid-Year Review (MYR) of the CAP in July 2008, the request was reduced by USD 14 million, bringing the total financial appeal to USD 448 million.

As of 3 September 2008, 50% of the revised CAP request was funded. Job creation, cash assistance and food relief needs total USD 184 million. Funding to other sectors includes: USD 2 million to Protection (48% funded), USD 3.1 million to Coordination and Support Services (117% funded), USD 15.5 million to Agriculture (27 % funded) and USD 6.7 million to Health (69 % funded). In addition, USD ten million has been directed to projects not yet designated to a specific sector.

UN agencies are currently scaling up their humanitarian response in the areas of local food production, food assistance and other income transfers. FAO and WFP have both included the oPt in the list of priority countries for their global response to soaring food prices in order to boost local food production and enhance food assistance. WFP carried out a "Safety Nets Study"²⁴ in order to assess the appropriateness of existing safety nets, evaluate the impact of high food prices in the oPt and identify options for interventions. The study recommended maintaining assistance to the needy, reaching out to pockets of urban food insecurity and expanding school feeding activities. As a response to rising prices, WFP is about to design an emergency operation designed around a food voucher scheme for the unemployed urban poor segment of the population. UNRWA introduced a school feeding program targeting 100,000 of the poorest refugee children at its schools across the Gaza Strip. Moreover, the Ministry of Agriculture launched a USD26 million appeal to assist 55,000 highly vulnerable families whose food security largely depends on small scale agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing.

CAP programs have been supplemented by two additional funding mechanisms: the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Humanitarian Emergency Response Fund (HERF). The first modality, allowed UNRWA to expand its food aid in the West Bank to more than twice the number of families it had previously planned for. The funds also enabled the

²⁴ WFP: "Safety Nets Study, July 2008

provision of food parcels containing flour, rice, sugar, sunflower oil, lentils and powdered milk over three months, to additional 32,600 families. WFP is using CERF funding to fill a one and a half month gap in its pipeline of food assistance in the West Bank. The project is benefiting 98,000 people which are not covered by UNRWA's projects through the provision of food rations. Since the beginning of the year, the CERF has disbursed a total of USD 5 million.

The HERF, launched in 2007 is an emergency pooled fund for the oPt and has supported 11 projects since the beginning of this year responding to various needs arising from humanitarian emergencies, at a total cost of USD 1.4 million. The HERF provided assistance during an outbreak of water borne disease caused by a drought in 2007, by delivering clean drinking water to some 950 families. During an acute weather crisis of frost and snow in January 2008 the HERF was able, through six projects, to ensure minimal heating and bedding for more than 3,200 families to protect them during a period of sub zero temperatures.

In Gaza the HERF has supported four projects targeting the health and water and sewage sectors, serving the whole population of Gaza. A new approach to the allocation of HERF funds adopted since August 2008, helped to enhance the collective sense of ownership of the Fund, as well as ensure that supported projects are based upon assessed humanitarian priorities.

In August 2008, OCHA started the coordination process towards the formulation of a new Common Humanitarian Action Plan, on which the CAP 2009 will be based. The next CAP is expected to reflect the institutionalization of other streams of funding, focusing on recovery and development plans and channelled through the PA, which were not in place during the planning of the previous CAP. As a result, a clearer definition of 'humanitarian' vis a vis 'developmental' needs is likely to emerge out of this process. The coordination process this year has been launched through a series of district level workshops with representatives from government and non governmental representatives, which will be followed by a national level workshop.

The UN also uses its good offices to seek solutions to disputes and crises causing humanitarian distress, including for example the ongoing dispute arising out of the replacement of teachers and doctors in Gaza and the extended strike by unions.

3.2 UN Development Response

The UN Country Team (UNCT),²⁵ under the leadership of the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, has aligned the work of the 19 UN agencies on the ground and formulated a Medium Term Response Plan (MTRP 2008-2010). This plan spells out the UN's strategic areas of support to the implementation of the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan: social development, governance, rural livelihoods and employment, protection and humanitarian assistance. The strategy is a significant step towards increased coordination among the UN agencies and programs working in the oPt and a strengthened dialogue with the PA. It will also lead to UN programs being increasingly linked directly with national priorities set out in the PRDP. The MTRP does not serve as a full fledged United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), a common UN development tool in more stable environments, but it does provide a coherent framework for effective UN interventions in the areas of humanitarian assistance, recovery and development. The UN will offer support to line ministries and institutions in developing sector strategies where appropriate

²⁵ The UNCT consists of 19 UN agencies and programs: FAO, ILO, IMF, OHCHR, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNDSS, UNEP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UN-Habitat, UNOPS, UNRWA, UNSCO, UNTSO, WFP, WHO, World Bank.

and monitoring and evaluation frameworks which will allow for increased tracking of the PRDP implementation. The Ministries of Finance and Planning strengthened the integrated budgeting and planning process and it is therefore important that sector strategies are established, particularly in sectors which receive substantial support from a large group of donors such as education and health.

In December 2006, UNDP and the Government of Spain signed a far-reaching agreement to establish a new fund to accelerate efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and to support UN reform efforts at the country level. The Spanish Government has committed over €528 million to the MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F). 59 countries are eligible to apply for assistance under different windows (youth, economic governance, gender, environment, culture, peace building and nutrition) among them the oPt. The UNCT in the oPt collaborated closely with the PA in the application for the MDG fund. Two joint programmes with an amount of USD 12 million have been approved. The Culture and Development program will support policies and good practices creating an enabling environment for cultural heritage promotion and protection, as well as the development of cultural industries, in the context of a revived cultural tourism in the oPt. The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment program will address gender-based violence and women's economic and political participation.

4. Looking ahead

This report has detailed ongoing humanitarian challenges throughout the oPt, including East Jerusalem, and the UN's response efforts. The report has also described the UN's development work in support of the Palestinian Authority. Indeed, despite the humanitarian conditions detailed in this report, the PA's security and other reform efforts in the West Bank mark a serious and sustained process of Palestinian self-empowerment. This process demonstrates a commendable determination to build the institutions and economy of a future Palestinian State despite unresolved conflict. As this process of self-empowerment continues, it must to be enabled and supported; it should be intensified and broadened; and it needs to be complimented by the most important element – a political agreement.

To enable the PA's efforts, the Government of Israel has to do substantially more. This should not be limited to the easing of access and movement restrictions, but should extend to other fronts, including security, the economy, the planning of land development and access to resources. As long as 60% of the land in the West Bank does not fall under either the civilian or the military responsibility of the PA, other positive developments might be diminished by the underutilization of vast amounts of land in the West Bank. Actions in this regard would enable the PA to have a more substantial effect on peoples' lives bringing them closer to realizing their goal of self-determination, as well as serving Israel's long-term well-being and security.

To support the PA's efforts, the international community must provide predictable financial assistance, increasingly relying on PA procedures where possible. The international community should augment the speed of transferring commitments into practical development programs identified in the PRDP. To strengthen institutions, donors can work together more closely and support a coherent capacity development framework which enhances monitoring and evaluation.

For its part, the PA must intensify its work on the path it has laid out for itself, with further security efforts combined with deeper reforms as spelled out in the PRDP -- in particular in governance and social development. Budget and planning integration achieved to date is commendable and needs to be continuously strengthened.

Palestinian institution-building cannot be limited to the West Bank. Ultimately it will have to be broadened to a reintegrated Gaza within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority. As this goal is pursued at a macro-level through political means, the grave socio-economic crisis in Gaza needs to be addressed through responsible actions by all parties. It is urgent that basic service delivery is de-politicised. Hamas must allow staff in the education and health sectors to return to their workplaces to provide the best services possible and issues related to public sector employees and civil society must be addressed. The UN is actively engaged in these and related issues.

Drip-feeding Gaza is not sustainable. Growth in the Palestinian economy can only be achieved if the Gaza Strip is part of the equation. Strict limitations on legitimate commerce as a result of closure measures have led to a flourishing black market economy that has become a major source of revenue for those that closure seeks to weaken. As a humanitarian imperative and to arrest further separation of Gaza and the West Bank, the UN continues to press for an expansion of the quantity and type of goods allowed into Gaza, as well as to find ways of re-opening the crossings within the framework of the Palestinian Authority. The UN is also doing everything it can to restart its own halted projects, as called for by the Quartet, and pursuant to a specific request to the Government of Israel at the highest levels.

In order to measure progress of the tri-partite action agreed upon, the revival of the Joint Liaison Committee (JLC) is fully supported by the UN as a vehicle to act faster and take stock of progress at the local level. Should the JLC be reconstituted, the UN is prepared to be at its service as an active partner.

The most essential ingredient for success is an Israeli-Palestinian political agreement in accordance with Security Council resolutions, leading to an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the creation of a contiguous, independent, and viable State of Palestine, living side-by-side with the State of Israel within secure and recognized borders. The United Nations, working with the parties, its regional and international partners, remains committed to supporting the ongoing negotiations towards this end.