



**Statement by James W. Rawley, United Nations Resident Coordinator,
on behalf of the UN Country Team, on the occasion of International Women's Day**

Jerusalem, 9 March 2015

On International Women's Day, the United Nations acknowledges the contribution of Palestinian women to the development of their communities and highlights the need to accelerate efforts for the promotion, protection and full realization of their rights.

As the world leaders are preparing to review and renew their promises to the Beijing Declaration and accelerate the implementation of the Platform of Action, the United Nations commends the laudable efforts made by the State of Palestine in the past years to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. These include the development and endorsement of the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women (2011-2019) and the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy (2014-2016), as well as the commitments to gender equality in the Palestinian National Development Plan and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

The accession to international treaties and conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, demonstrates the commitment of the State of Palestine to bring an end to gender inequalities and ensure effective accountability. The United Nations stands ready to assist the Government of Palestine in the implementation and monitoring of these obligations.

While we celebrate progress and achievements, the United Nations recognizes that progress has been slow. The occupation poses many challenges to Palestinians including women. The United Nations remains particularly concerned by the continued obstacles that Palestinian women face in accessing basic services, health care, psychosocial support, water and sanitation, justice institutions and economic opportunities. Violence against women also remains a serious concern. This requires sustained commitment at the highest levels and allocation of appropriate resources.

In the Gaza Strip, the dramatic deterioration of already existing dire living conditions following the latest conflict have heightened the vulnerability and suffering of the entire population, but particularly Gazan women and their families. The United Nations will continue working with the Government of Palestine, to support reconstruction efforts and provide vital humanitarian and development assistance, while recognizing the importance of ensuring that the rights of women are protected and fulfilled.

Finally, the United Nations reiterates its commitment to voicing women's concerns and supporting their participation in all decision that affect their lives, including the engagement of Palestinian women in conflict resolution and peace-building, in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

On international women's day, as we join in the celebrations across the world, I reiterate the Secretary General's call for advancing the cause of women's human rights and the urgent need to accelerate progress for women and girls everywhere.

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