



### **Prime Minister Dr. Salam Fayyad address at the Government Media Center**

Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning to all of you. It is indeed a pleasure for me to take part in the launching of the Human Development Report OPT for 2009/2010. I extend my sincere appreciation to the authors of this report and all agencies and individuals who provided assistance and the information necessary to complete the report. It is important to applaud the diligent and methodical way in which you actually assessed the situation. By utilizing surveys and other methods, you were able to go directly to the people on the subject matter of this report that fundamentally addresses their own security or more generally as, I choose to call it, the human condition.

I believe the report itself makes two important conceptual contributions. One is by adopting a holistic definition of the term “Human Security” to refer to freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom to live in dignity. This is in a way allows one to reflect upon the human condition in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It allows one to examine security not only in its narrow definition, but more generally in terms of how people feel about themselves, about their situation, future prospects, and their state of mind. Clearly these factors have been and continue to be affected by the practices of the occupation regime that has been with us since 1967. Hence, I believe one key contribution that the report makes is in the way it chooses to define security in an inclusive manner.

The second conceptual contribution regards the emphasis on the importance of human security as it relates to the possibility or prospects of attaining sustainable economic development. You clearly note that sustainable economic development is dependent on human security. I think that this concept is particularly important. By linking the two together-sustainable economic development and human security- one is led to the conclusion that the attainment of sustainable economic development will remain an elusive goal in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as long as occupation continues. The occupation regime permeates all aspects of our life and is manifested in many ways, not least is the impact of the fragmentation of the West Bank and the continued siege on Gaza. This siege has resulted in an unprecedented decrease in the level of well being. If there was a “misery index” we would find that it is currently at its peak even when compared with other periods of time in the last four decades. The siege has managed to negatively affect all facets of life in Gaza.

The occupation regime has predominately overwhelmed efforts to improve the situation within the OPT. The Palestinian Authority, with the support of the international community, has taken upon itself the responsibility of improving life conditions for Palestinians. However, despite all



good intentions, abilities and initiatives undertaken by all of us, our outcomes are limited and undermined by the occupation regime practices. The conclusion noted in your report coincides very much with our own assessment that sustainable economic development can happen only if human security is attained. But, this is a two way street, also. Human security and the quality of human security is critically dependent on sustainable economic development. The causality here runs both ways. Sustainable economic development can't be achieved under occupation. We have seen in the past three years a slight recovery from time to time; but let's not forget this comes after years of weak economic performance characterized by periods of outright recession. So we still have a long way to go before we can reverse the ill facts of so many years of poor economic performance. These are of course important challenges that do require us to sharpen the focus of our interventions with the support of the international community in order to continue doing the best we can to improve the economic conditions in Palestine. Also, by doing so, the report focuses attention on the need to have strong and concrete actions on the part of the international community to bring an end to the underlying cause of all of this misery-occupation.

Over the past three years, the quality of the human condition in Palestine has also been adversely affected by the current state of separation, which regrettably has become more deeply entrenched since mid 2007. A key goal for us is to reunite the country and the institutions of the Palestinian people. This is a prerequisite for the success of the efforts which we have embarked upon which is aimed chiefly at ending the occupation and establishing the independent sovereign state of Palestine on the territories occupied in 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Our road to freedom has never been easy; complications continue to certainly face our efforts to end occupation. However, we are not short on determination or hope. As a matter of fact, we are encouraged by recent achievements over the past couple of years and are aware of the difficulties that still remain ahead of us. We are hopeful that in these efforts we can go forward in preparing ourselves for statehood by around mid-2011. We most certainly count of the continuous support and active involvement of the international community in support of these efforts not only economically and financially, but most importantly politically.

With each passing day, we become more aware that the notion of Israel ending occupation is not likely to happen. The validity of this proposition in light of the reality on the ground becomes more and more questionable. Actually what we see is exactly the opposite. The occupation regime is working to become more deeply entrenched. This is a fact that the international community should address as we move forward. In this period, I believe it is a must that the world community takes on a much more active role in ending the occupation. The international community is unanimous on the goal...end occupation and establish a Palestinian state, but is



less clear on how to get there. That is really the point that requires more focus and attention. The report does document the deterioration of human condition in the Occupied Palestinian Territory certainly when compared with the baseline of the first Palestinian Human Development Report in 1997. This is hardly surprising given the reality of events that have taken place since that time which have also contributed to the deterioration of conditions and what came with that by way of plummeting living standards both in the West Bank and Gaza. Nevertheless, I think we really should redouble our efforts aimed at continuing to bring about improvements in ways that can reinforce the capacity of our people to withstand the adversity associated with occupation and end it.

Once again, I would like to thank UNDP and the report authors for sponsoring such an activity and report highlighting human security issues within the OPT. I believe we must deal with the underlying root cause of the misery facing Palestinians (occupation.) It's an opportunity for me to thank the UNDP more generally for its contributions to the welfare of our people which goes back to 1978 with the UN General Assembly resolution to establish a program of assistance to the Palestinian people. Your office was then established in East Jerusalem where it continues to be located. We certainly would like to have all of our international interlocutors located in the capital of the future state of Palestine.

I thank the UNDP for their contributions to our efforts in the state building sphere, provision of technical assistance, and in implementing important infrastructural projects. The role of the UNDP acquires added importance now given the situation in Gaza. We are hopeful that this will be considered a matter of higher urgency and more efforts placed on lifting the siege to allow for reconstruction. We look to the UNDP for continued involvement in ways that could ameliorate the difficulties that our people in Gaza continue to face. I would also like to thank the UN family including all its institutions and programs beginning with UNRWA and its services to our refugees. Also, our thanks go to OCHA for its continuous efforts in monitoring and documenting living conditions and reporting on the situation within Palestine. We extend our appreciation to the UN family of agencies which continue to provide assistance in health, food aid programs, and in other areas. In addition, we are thankful for the support of the international community, in general, for having been with us along the way. It is a very difficult path to freedom, but we are fully determined to travel to the end.

Thank you very much