

**INTERVENTION BY MR. MUNU MAHAWAR, JS[UNP] AT MINISTERIAL-
LEVEL MEETING OF THE NAM COMMITTEE ON PALESTINE ON
OCTOBER 01, 2015**

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished members of the Committee,

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for organizing this meeting of the NAM Committee on Palestine.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Government and people of Palestine on the adoption of historical resolution on raising the flags of Non-Member Observer States at the United Nations by the UN General Assembly. It is a positive step. As a member of the Security Council during 2011-12, India supported Palestine's bid for full membership of the United Nations and it also co-sponsored the General Assembly resolution in November 2012 that upgraded the status of Palestine to a non-member Observer State.

Mr. Chairman,

NAM has a long history of solidarity with the Palestinian people. India as a founding member of the Movement has always supported the cause of the Palestinian people.

Mr. Chairman,

India supports a negotiated solution, resulting in a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel, as endorsed in the Quartet Roadmap and relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions. India has played a proactive role in garnering support for the Palestinian cause in multilateral fora.

Mr. Chairman,

Apart from political support for the Palestinian cause, India continues to support development and nation-building efforts of Palestine by consistently extending technical and financial assistance. We contribute US \$ 1 million annually to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). India has also pledged US\$ 4 million in response to the National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan for Gaza. We are implementing development projects in Palestine, jointly with Brazil and South Africa within the framework of IBSA, and have pledged US \$ 1 million for a new project to reconstruct the Atta Habib medical centre in Gaza.

Government of India has extended budgetary assistance of US \$ 10 million and project assistance of US \$ 30 million to the Palestinian State. India has been contributing material and technical assistance to the Palestinian people. With the Government of India's aid, two projects were completed in the field of higher education i.e. Jawaharlal Nehru Library at the Al Azhar University in Gaza city and the Mahatma Gandhi Library-cum-Student Activity Centre at the Palestine Technical College at Deir Al Balah in the Gaza Strip. Work on the project of constructing two schools in West Bank, through aid

provided by India, is nearing completion. Work on two more projects: (i) setting up India-Palestine Centre of Excellence in IT; and (ii) Equipping Vocational Training Centre in Palestine, will be completed in 2015 itself.

India has been involved in capacity building and skill upgradation initiatives of Palestinian Government. More than 12,000 Palestinians have graduated from Indian universities. Apart from 10 annual Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarships, Indian Government has been offering 100 Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) slots from which around 760 Palestinians got benefitted till now. India has also offered training to Palestinian security forces and diplomats.

The Indian President will be visiting Palestine in the coming days during which he will inaugurate a number of projects dealing with education and capacity building. He will also inaugurate India-Palestine Centre of Excellence in ICT and Innovation during the visit. This will also help in enhancing IT skills of Palestinians and increase their employment prospects in IT and IT enabled services sector.

Mr. Chairman,

Fresh violence recently erupting around the holy sites of the Old City of Jerusalem is cause of concern. We call for all to show restraint, to avoid provocation and unilateral actions and to return to the peace process. We firmly believe that dialogue is the only viable option in the search for a just, durable and comprehensive peaceful solution of the Palestinian issue.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, we think NAM has an important role to play in supporting the Palestinian leadership in their efforts towards realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People. I wish to reiterate India's commitment to the work of this Committee. I am confident that under your guidance, we would contribute significantly to the work of the Movement in support of the Palestinian people.

I thank you.
