

*Permanent Observer Mission  
of the State of Palestine  
to the United Nations*



البعثة المراقبة الدائمة  
لدولة فلسطين  
لدى الأمم المتحدة

*Statement by Mr. Oddai Abdelhamid, the Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, before the First Regular Session of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)*

*Agenda Item 4 (a): Country programme documents (8 February 2023)*

*(Check against delivery)*

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Mr./ Madam President,

Thank you and let me start by expressing our deep sadness at the tragic loss of life across Türkiye and Syria, and to extend condolences to those affected by the devastating earthquake and aftershocks.

We would like to thank Ms. Adele Khodr, the Regional Director of the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Office as well as the entire UNICEF team, for their support and cooperation in the development of the Area Program Document on Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine, which is in line with the National Development Plan of the State of Palestine and UNSDCF agreed between the UN Country Teams, the State of Palestine and the respective countries.

Mr./Madam President,

The State of Palestine acknowledges UNICEF's key role in supporting Palestinian children, youth and women, and we are grateful for its efforts and commitment to continue providing health and nutrition, including vaccines and psychosocial and mental health support, child protection, quality education and WASH services, saving many young lives and giving hope to the youth in our region, where desperation, agony and pain are an understatement.

What UNICEF has done during the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic was exemplary and we are very grateful for UNICEF and governments that have extended financial, logistical, and political support to the organization in fulfilling its mandate during those precarious times. We are particularly very grateful to Jordan, Lebanon and Syria for the generous hosting of Palestine refugee children and their families, and for extending the much-needed support.

Mr./Madam President,

Minimizing the impact of conflicts on children is an extremely challenging task, and this is evident everywhere in Occupied Palestine, where Palestinian children continue to endure a protracted protection crisis due to the ongoing Israeli occupation.

Israel, the occupying Power, targets our children, the dearest of our population, to traumatize the entire Palestinian society. From night raids to attacks on schools, and home demolitions to forced displacement, our children are killed, detained, displaced, and maimed by Israeli occupying forces and settlers in what is a coordinated campaign depriving Palestinian children from their right to childhood.

Whether it's the Palestinian child living under a blockade, or the child whose home was demolished and is forcibly displaced or is at risk of forced displacement, this is just a glimpse of the dark reality in Palestine, making the protection of Palestinian children more important than ever.

We call on all Member States to take the necessary measures to ensure the protection of the Palestinian civilian population, particularly children.

UNICEF in Palestine faces immense challenges, and we call on all Member States to support UNICEF's efforts through supporting the Area Program Document. The State of Palestine pledges its full cooperation and support to UNICEF's noble service for our children and youth, and our common future.

Thank you.