



Conference for the reconstruction of Gaza

Cairo, 12 October 2014

Switzerland

Mr. Secretary General
Mr. President,
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

Two weeks ago I was in Gaza and witnessed the tragic loss of human life and the massive damage caused by the last round of violence. First and foremost I wish to convey, on behalf of the Government and the people of Switzerland, our condolences to all affected persons during this conflict. I also wish to commend the courageous aid workers in Gaza who throughout the conflict and despite the risks to their life carried out their humanitarian work.

Today, the Gaza Strip is no longer a livable place. The humanitarian needs are immense. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced and have lost their homes. The dependence of the Gazan population on foreign aid further increased.

It is high time to exit the vicious circle of violence Palestinians and Israelis have endured for too many years. In order to avoid a perilous return to the status quo ante and prevent a socio-economic, humanitarian and political collapse of the Gaza strip, the current dynamics need to change drastically. For this reason, Switzerland believes that the international community must bring about a new paradigm resting on the following five elements:

First, the current cease-fire must be consolidated and flanked by robust monitoring mechanisms allowing all parties to gradually rebuild trust and fostering security for all.

Second, the blockade of Gaza must be lifted and solutions to allow freedom of movement for people and goods must be found. This is a necessary condition for the immediate recovery of Gaza but also for its stability and long-term development, as well as for the unity and viability of a future Palestinian State. Under international law, Israel has the duty of ensuring the basic needs of the Palestinian civilian population.

Third, the Palestinian consensus government must be urgently empowered to function effectively in Gaza and in the West Bank, and oversee the reconstruction of the Strip. I commend the 25th September agreement between Fatah and Hamas and the meeting in Gaza, on October 9th, of the Cabinet of the National Consensus Government as important steps in this direction. Other concrete measures towards reunifying the Palestinian administration must be implemented without delay. Switzerland is exerting efforts in this regard by seeking solutions for the reintegration of Palestinian government institutions and payment of civil servants and invites other states to support this process.

Fourth, international humanitarian law must be respected and independent investigation of alleged war crimes must be carried out. Switzerland supported the establishment of the United Nations Human

Rights Council Commission of Inquiry for the occupied Palestinian territory and asks the parties to fully cooperate with it.

Fifth, there is an urgent need for a resumption of the peace process based on clear parameters in order to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict leading to the establishment of the State of Palestine, coexisting in peace and security with the State of Israel.

Over the last summer, Switzerland has allocated an additional five million dollars to respond to the humanitarian needs created by the conflict in Gaza. For the period 2014-2017, Switzerland pledges to invest an average of 31 million dollars per year in the occupied Palestinian territory. The main domains of intervention will be in the fields of humanitarian aid, support to UNRWA, local governance, rule of law, economic empowerment and peace promotion. Depending on availability, additional funding could be allocated if progresses are made on lifting the blockade, strengthening the consensus government and maintaining the cease-fire.

Thank you.
