

SR LANKA

**Statement of the delegation of Sri Lanka during the general debate  
under Item 7: Human rights situation in Palestine and other  
Occupied Palestinian Territories  
16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council, 21 March 2011**

Mr. President,

At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the Ambassador of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement under this agenda item. We have also taken note of the reports submitted under this item.

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka observes the concerns expressed by the High Commissioner and the Special Rapporteur in their reports, during the consideration of this agenda item, on the current deteriorating humanitarian situation in Palestine, other Occupied Palestinian territories, and occupied Syrian Golan.

Mr. President,

The re-launch of direct peace negotiations last year between Israel and Palestine after nearly two years, was a positive development in addressing the relevant issues. However it is regrettable that there has been a pause in this important process, although diplomatic efforts are being made to facilitate its resumption. There is an urgent need to restart these negotiations, addressing the major impediments, which has prevented the parties from continuing such negotiations. In this regard, a freeze on settlement expansion, which continues to be the single most important obstacle in resuming the peace talks, needs to be addressed with a sense of urgency. To this end, intensified efforts especially by the Quartet are required, to forge an early settlement, which would help alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinian people.

Further, as also observed by the Special Rapporteur, the continuation of the Gaza blockade has made the situation of the civilian population to be of critical concern, as it continues to negatively impact on their economic and social rights, and the rights to work, food and health. Intensified concerted action is required to end this blockade. To

this end, there is no substitute for diplomatic engagement between the concerned parties. The restriction of the freedom of movement of people and goods, continue to exacerbate the humanitarian situation for the civilian population and impair their economic and social rights.

Mr. President,

The occupation continues to be one of the main causes for the current human rights and humanitarian situation in the Palestinian occupied territory. Therefore, the way to find a sustainable solution to this predicament is through meaningful negotiations, which would achieve a two-State settlement, culminating in the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its neighbours. The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, through such a settlement would also entail greater acceptance of Israel within and beyond the region. To that end, we urge the parties concerned to pursue all diplomatic means, despite a painstakingly difficult road ahead in dealing with complex and difficult issues in achieving this goal.

Thank you.