



Press Release

MAS Participates in the 14th Ministerial Conference of the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)



Sunday, 24 July 2016; The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) participated in the 14th Ministerial Conference of the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), convened this week in Nairobi, Kenya. The Conference, held every four years to examine key developments in the global economy and agree on the mandate and work programme of UNCTAD, was attended by 4000 delegates from all UN member states, civil society and academia. MAS, represented by its Research Coordinator, Mr. Raja Khalidi, participated in a Roundtable on "The Road to Recovery: prospects for sustained Palestinian economic development" which included the Palestinian Minister of National Economy, H.E. Ms. Abeer Odeh, as well as representatives from the European Parliament, the Swedish Federation of Industry, as well as Emeritus Professor Atef Kubursi (Macmaster University, Canada) and Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations for Economic Development. The Conference closed on 22 July, and its outcome included a renewed commitment to strengthen UNCTAD's 30 year old programme of assistance to the Palestinian people

Panelists stressed the range of economic challenges that persist despite PNA's efforts to address them with the support of the international community. Panelists also asserted the irreconcilable contradiction between development and occupation irrespective of the development paradigm adopted, and the manner in which the right to development of future generations was compromised, engendering a situation of de-development or distorted development.



Panelists also focused on the much faceted cost of occupation, such as the opportunity cost of lack of access to so-called "Area C", Israeli application of excessive fiscal handling fees, failure to apply and update VAT clearance mechanism to remit customs on indirect imports, severe restrictions on exit/entry ports restricting import/export, abusive deductions on health and electricity bills charged by Israel to the PNA, fiscal depletion, restricted trade capacity, not to mention property and infrastructure destruction.

All panelists agreed that the only way to ensure complete recovery, and for the Palestinian economy to realize its potential, is to end the occupation and achieve the two-state solution based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine. Towards that end, concrete steps are needed to adopt resolutions in line with UN Charter and relevant Resolutions, and also to end the unilateral coercive measures imposed by the Israeli occupation. Panelists also stressed the need for reviewing and amending the asymmetric Palestinian trade relations with Israel beyond the obsolete Paris Protocol, while guaranteeing the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement by Israel with respect to Palestinian trade was an urgent priority.