

The Israeli and Palestinian delegations conducted during the last six days serious, deep and practical talks with the aim of reaching a permanent and stable agreement between the two parties.

The Taba talks were unprecedented in their positive atmosphere and expression of mutual willingness to meet the national, security and existential needs of each side.

Given the circumstances and time constraints, it proved impossible to reach understandings on all issues, despite the substantial progress that was achieved in each of the issues discussed.

The sides declare that they have never been closer to reaching an agreement and it is thus our shared belief that the remaining gaps could be bridged with the resumption of negotiations following the Israeli elections.

The two sides take upon themselves to return to normalcy and to establish [a] security situation on the ground through the observation of their mutual commitments in the spirit of the Sharm e-Sheikh memorandum.

The negotiation teams discussed four main themes: refugees, security, borders and Jerusalem, with a goal to reach a permanent agreement that will bring an end to the conflict between them and provide peace to both people.

The two sides took into account the ideas suggested by President Clinton together with their respective qualifications and reservations.

On all these issues there was substantial progress in the understanding of the other side's positions and in some of them the two sides grew closer.

As stated above, the political timetable prevented reaching an agreement on all the issues.

However, in light of the significant progress in narrowing the differences between the sides, the two sides are convinced that in a short period of time and given an intensive effort and the acknowledgment of the essential and urgent nature of reaching an agreement, it will be possible to bridge the differences remaining and attain a permanent settlement of peace between them.

In this respect, the two sides are confident that they can begin and move forward in this process at the earliest practical opportunity.

The Taba talks conclude an extensive phase in the Israeli-Palestinian permanent status negotiations with a sense of having succeeded in rebuilding trust between the sides and with the notion that they were never closer in reaching an agreement between them than today.

We leave Taba in a spirit of hope and mutual achievement, acknowledging that the foundations have been laid both in reestablishing mutual confidence and in having progressed in a substantive engagement on all core issues.

The two sides express their gratitude to President Hosni Mubarak for hosting and facilitating these talks."They also express their thanks to the European Union for its role in supporting the talks.