

Messrs. Co-Chairmen, today ends the opening phase of the Madrid Conference to which we have come with an open mind and the keenness to contribute to the establishment of peace based on justice, international legitimacy, and the United Nations resolutions.

It is with great satisfaction that we listened to the statements of the co-sponsors, Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev. They emphasized the basic principle guiding this Conference - namely, compliance with international law, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and the safeguarding of the right of peoples to live in security and with self-determination.

The Lebanese delegation also listened with much interest to the statements of all the other parties called upon to negotiate to bring about the desired peace.

Therefore, we would like to make the following observations.

Firstly, the holding of this Conference was an indispensable first step towards achieving the objective of peace for which this Conference indeed took place. A just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in our region, based on international legitimacy and the United Nations resolutions.

Secondly, we consider the various points in the statements of Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev, and particularly, those pertaining to the establishment of peace, based on justice and fairness. We consider them to be a viable means for peace and stability in our region.

Thirdly, we believe that the statement made on behalf of the European Community is a balanced and much appreciated contribution to the genuine efforts for the fulfillment of the aims of the Conference. We noticed with satisfaction that Lebanon was singled out in a paragraph which supported the implementation of Resolution 425.

Fourthly, having listened to the other statements, a clear difference emerged between Arab positions, which sought to overcome hate [between] countries and the residue of the past in order to open a new page in regional relations founded on wisdom and reason, and that of an Israeli position which maintained its traditional ideas and allegations which have been clearly proven to run counter to the peace process in the region.

The statement of the Israeli delegation was not only lacking a declaration of acceptance of the principle of this Conference, embodied in the United Nations resolutions, and the principle of "land for peace" - which have been unanimously agreed to by the organizers of this Conference and its participants. It also pursued its falsifications and denigration of international legitimacy and the United Nations Charter and resolutions.

We had hoped that the Israeli delegation would share our conviction that the success of this Conference depends on the will of all parties to seek peace and the need to demonstrate this will by taking specific measures in the field that would bring about mutual trust.

We are still awaiting a clear demonstration of that will on the part of the Israeli delegation by declaring its commitment to the implementation of Resolutions 242, 338, the United

Nations Charter, and in particular, the right of peoples to self-determination so as to make this right attainable by all, and especially at present, attainable by the Palestinian people.

Our attention was drawn, in the Israeli Prime Minister's statement, to his attempt to annul the United Nations resolutions and question their legitimacy, although Israel itself would not have come into existence if it were not for a Security Council resolution granting the Jews a part of Palestine.

Moreover, if that were Israel's attitude towards the U.N. resolutions, then what would be the meaning of holding this Conference, which is based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338?

I would now like to turn to Lebanese - the national Lebanese issue. Lebanon has demanded, and reiterates its demand before you today, for the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of all of Israel from all the Lebanese territories, pursuant to Security Council Resolution 425 of 19 March 1978.

However, it is surprising that the head of the Israeli delegation should speak of peace without taking one single step towards achieving it. On the contrary, Israel continues to aggress Lebanon and rejects the implementation of Resolution 425.

Is Israeli escalation in southern Lebanon, which has accompanied this Conference, the best response to the umbrella of principles and values which govern this gathering?

Desirous of peace, Lebanon has made giant strides to recover.

It, therefore, declares before you its undertaking to preserve security throughout its territory, especially in the south, as soon as Israel complies with Resolution 425 and withdraws its forces beyond the Lebanese international boundaries according to international provisions. The Lebanese delegation can only emphasize once again that Resolution 425 should be applied today, and not tomorrow, since this would provide an incentive for the Peace Conference to succeed and would pave the way for the settlement of the region's problems.

Sixth, we wish to stress the need to think about the future, and to arrive at a conception for the development of the region which would carry with [it] the foundations of construction, social justice, and economic welfare.

However, we would also like to stress our belief that it is more important, and more constructive, to negotiate the present rather than the future.

Let us focus therefore, and agree, on our present to enable us to prepare for our future.

How can we consider distributing their (inaudible) before we shrug off our shoulders the burden of adversity so that the proclamation may enhance the prospect of peace, the status of Jerusalem, a halt to settlement, and respect for the principle of land for peace. Therefore, we say that to pave the way for multilateral negotiations we need to make significant progress in bilateral negotiations.

Finally, we have noticed in the Israeli writer's reply that Israel is attached to withdrawing from Lebanon and does not have any ambitions in Lebanese territory. Therefore, we wonder why Israel continues to occupy Lebanon, why it continues to incite violence in Lebanon, why it continues to denigrate the dignity of our people.

The independence of Lebanon, as though it was Israel's obsession begins with the south. And as long as the south is under the yoke of occupation, [the] independence of Lebanon will not be complete. Israel, in fact, has brought with it all the contradictions in the world. Israel knows very well that Syria came to Lebanon supporting legitimacy and consolidating unity.

Lebanon's relationship with Syria does not accept Israel's interference or even Israel's intention to link its presence in Lebanon to the presence of Syria.

Finally, Israel's attempt to link its withdrawal from Lebanon with any other element or factor carries with it a clear rejection of Resolution 425, which should be implemented unconditionally.

Thank you.