

30 November, 2015



Indian Council of World Affairs
Sapru House, Barakhamba Road
New Delhi

Opening Remarks

by

Ambassador Nalin Surie
Director General, ICWA

at

Function to commemorate the

“International day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people”

Sapru House, New Delhi
November 30, 2015

1 We at the ICWA are pleased to host this important gathering today to commemorate the International day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people. This is but a manifestation of the importance that we in India attach to our long standing friendship with the people of Palestine. We have always stood in solidarity with them and their just cause in both moral and material terms. We have most recently further strengthened our partnership in the nation and capacity building efforts of Palestine.

2 During his State visit to Palestine on 12- 13 October this year President Pranab Mukherji congratulated the people of Palestine on the historic occasion of the installation of the national flag of Palestine at the United Nations on 30 Sep 2015. He reiterated the great importance India attaches to its long standing friendship with Palestine and underlined that empathy with the Palestinian cause and friendship with the people of Palestine are an integral part of India's foreign policy. He emphasised that we in India would like to see the people of Palestine living within secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel, as endorsed in the Arab peace initiative, the Quartet roadmap and relevant UNSC resolutions.

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3 Just as we focus on peace, prosperity and development in our region, we believe it is equally important to focus on these fundamentals in the Middle East. The Palestine issue is at the centre of the conflict between the Arab world and Israel. Peace and stability in the region is in India's interest and we firmly believe that dialogue and an early resumption of the peace process are the only viable option in the effort to bring about a just, durable, comprehensive and peaceful solution of the Palestine issue.

4 We have with us today a distinguished list of speakers. I thank them for joining us. My thanks in particular to Amb. Gharekhan who has kindly consented to deliver the keynote address. You will all agree with me that there is scarcely any other person who is better qualified to do so.

5 May I now invite Mr. Rajiv Chandran, National Information Officer, UNIC to read out the message of UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon on the occasion of International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people.
