



Statement of the IDB Governor for the State of Palestine

The 43rd Annual Meeting of the IDB Board of Governors
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Original Text
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Your Excellency Brother Zied Ladhari,
Chairman of the Board of Governors
Your Excellency Dr. Bandar Bin Mohammad Hajjar,
Chairman of the Islamic Development Bank Group
Your Excellencies, Governors and Alternate Governors
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Assalamu Alaykum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuhu,

On behalf of Palestine, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency President Beji Caid Essebsi, his government, and IDB staff for the organisation, pleasant welcome, and warm reception. In this meeting, we are pleased to notice the fingerprints of His Excellency the President of IDB as they develop a new character for the Bank, taking it from being a development bank to a bank for developers, and from centralisation to decentralisation, with a view to eliminating congested bottlenecks and delegating authority so as to deliver on the ground, not just sign agreements on paper. Projects go through a number of stages, starting from a pledge, to a commitment, then to disbursement. The real benchmark is disbursement, because it is directly linked to delivery. To that end, you decided to restructure IDB in a manner that would serve the new direction towards absolute transparency, which even included removing curtains off windows. Congratulations for developing the institution to serve delivery.

To complete the effort you started, with IDB operating in an international atmosphere fraught with challenges, rapid changes, contradictions, and uncertainties that will only get more intense in the future; I believe that the traditional development models solely based on aid will not be sufficient to face future developments.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A fast track or roadmap to advancement simply does not exist. Rather, there is a need for multiple and varying ways of change that would enable adaptation and responsiveness to the surrounding contexts, needs, and priorities with reinforcement from new modes of thinking, working, and cooperation.

I call on IDB to “*stand out*” by networking with untraditional partners, working on integrating the grassroots perspective that stems from the priorities of the most marginalized groups of society, the senior-level international participation, the ability to establish networks for exchange between people and institutions around the world, and the maintenance of flexibility and decentralisation so as to be able to respond and deliver. The restructuring of IDB and its procedures helps in addressing the challenges and translating ideas into viable projects.

I believe this “standing out” I am asking IDB to adopt has a number of pillars, most importantly: implementing high-quality projects that would have an impact on various economic and social sectors, involving all stakeholders of such projects in the selection process, and building international partnerships based on cooperation towards achieving the selection of those projects.

All of that is to realise our strategic objectives, namely:

1. Reducing poverty and inequality, accelerating sustainability, and building a secure and inclusive society;
2. Establishing an early warning system to face the crises that could befall some member countries;
3. Strengthening IDB's capacity to deliver high-quality projects in various areas of social and physical infrastructure;
4. Achieving coherence between theoretical development frameworks and the policies and projects that reflect such frameworks;
5. Institutional and communal networking to present the true image of Islam; Developing strategic and holistic education and learning programmes through modern technology; Shifting from one-way knowledge transfer to shared learning;
6. Committing to projects, policies, and activities that promote excellence and convenience for IDB staff;
7. Empowering women and enhancing their economic situation in member country societies so as to serve the purpose of transforming the family from a consuming unit into a productive unit; and
8. Replacing gradual change with high-precision change, eliminating defects, and restructuring of the institutions and systems that govern our work.

As to Palestine, Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen, for the past decade we have suffered, and continue to suffer, division. We have signed several reconciliation agreements, but none have been implemented. We will never stop trying, because our only option is reconciliation and the restoration of Gaza to Palestinian legitimacy after 10 years since the coup d'état, during which we signed the Cairo I and II agreements and the Doha agreement in the presence of His Highness the Emir, but to date the agreements have not been implemented on the ground.

The people of Gaza are our people, and we offer everything we can to support and help them so as to achieve national Palestinian unity and end this dark chapter of Palestinian history; the chapter of putsch and dissension.

Israel wishes this dissension to continue. Division of the Palestinian people is a benefit for the Israeli colonial interest of maintaining the status quo: a hijacked Gaza and an occupied West Bank. We spare no effort to break that status quo, in Gaza with Hamas, and in the West Bank with the occupation.

The continuation of division has taken its toll on the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, which has been hampered. Disbursements for the reconstruction represent no more than 40% of the relevant pledges. Gaza continues to suffer tragic circumstances in terms of water and electricity supply, as well as unemployment, particularly among the youth. Most seriously, unemployment among

people aged 19-29 in the Palestinian territories in general has reached 56%, which portends serious social, economic, and political consequences.

Israel is endeavouring to block and seize elements of production, particularly land and water, so as to expand its settlement agenda aimed at undermining any possibility of establishing a Palestinian state in the future. Additionally, the siege on the city of Al-Quds, depletion of its economic resources, and the repeated incursions into the Aqsa Mosque are geared towards completing the Judaisation of the city.

In this context, I would like to convey our thanks to President Beji Caid Essebsi, King Abdullah II, President Abdel Fattah Sisi, and all Arabs and Muslims who united with President Abu Mazen in alerting the new American administration to the seriousness of relocating the US Embassy to Al-Quds, hoping and working for that possibility never to materialise. The city of Al-Quds is currently witnessing extremely hard circumstances and requires that we offer every possible form of help and support. IDB is to be commended for everything it does for the city, but we need to mobilise funds to reinforce the steadfastness of its people to maintain the Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic identity of the city and its civilisation and humanitarian features, so that it remains an open city for worshippers.

IDB also provides, through the Aqsa and Al-Quds funds, aid kindly fed by Arab and Islamic funds for a number of developmental purposes in Palestine. We call for greater coordination and that IDB review the operation of those funds so as to maximise their effectiveness and mobilise additional inputs for them in light of the resolutions of Arab and Muslim summits.

As it reviews its own mechanisms and structures, IDB is expected to include the department concerned with Palestine in the process to evaluate performance and study the impact, with a view to mobilising additional funds from countries and from the Arab and Muslim private sector.

I had participated in the meeting of the Union of Arab Banks, which brings together some 650 Arab banks and has deposits estimated at US\$ 3 trillion. We asked them to establish a profit-based fund for investment in Palestine, and the UAB board of directors kindly approved the idea, which is currently being developed further. IDB could be one of the most important partners in this project in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Israel is attempting to push us onto a regional track aimed at circumventing the Arab peace initiative, which calls for ending the occupation of our land in return for ties between Arabs and Israel. On its side, Israel is trying to flip the equation by reversing the order of implementing the Arab peace initiative, starting with ties with the countries of the region without paying the political bill, namely ending the occupation. Israel is also trying to push the so-called “economic peace”, under the hypothetical assumption that the political track has reached an impasse. In doing so, Israel is propagating the fallacy that bread is all what Palestinians care about. Indeed food, employment opportunities, self-development, and economy are important to us, and are actually leverages for our struggle, politics, and resilience of the people in protecting their land. That is the role being played by Arab and international donors, and by Arab and Muslim organisations. However, to Israel we quote Jesus, peace be upon him: “Man shall not live by

bread alone". We seek freedom, dignity, an end to the occupation, and establishment of our state with Al-Quds as its capital.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Aqsa Mosque, which is being defiled by the occupation's army and herds of settlers, needs your oil to light its lanterns. It needs you to assume a mighty and proud position for the sake of the glory and dignity of the Arab and Muslim Ummah.

Today, our valiant captives in the prisons of the occupation are fighting the empty-stomach battle. Their hunger strike has been going on for 30 days for their dignity and self-esteem, for demands that represent minimal humanitarian demands, as stipulated in the Fourth Geneva Convention and provisions of international law.

They need your support and succour until they are released once and for all. As we always say, reinforcing a captive's resilience is not a form of normalization with the jailer.

Mr. Chairman,

Birds that hatch in cages believe that flying is prohibited. However, our people firmly believe that fling towards freedom is imperative.

With you, we will break the cage.

Wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.