1. The Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Committee on Palestine met at the United Nations Headquarters, in New York, on 26 September 2018, taking into account the urgent need to address recent worrying developments in the international arena and the sharp deterioration of the situation on the ground, which dangerously undermines the inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people and the prospects for the realization of a peaceful and just solution for the question of Palestine.

2. At the outset, the Ministers declared their firm commitment to the principles and positions regarding the question of Palestine adopted in previous Declarations by the Committee, including the Ministerial Declaration adopted on 05 April 2018 in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, on the margins of the XVIII Mid-Term Ministerial Conference of the Movement, which, inter alia, denounced the provocative decision by the Government of the United States of America, on 6 December 2017, regarding Jerusalem, in contravention of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. They also recalled the positions affirmed by past Ministerial Meetings and Summits of the Movement regarding the question of Palestine, and reaffirmed their abiding solidarity with the Palestinian People and unwavering support for their just cause.

3. The Ministers stressed that a just, lasting solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects must remain a priority on the Movement’s agenda. Hence, the Ministers appealed to the Members of the Movement, to renew their commitment and further strengthen and coordinate their efforts to promote the realization of justice and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People, including to self-determination and independence. They stressed the importance and urgency of action in this regard, in light of the sensitive juncture of their plight and extreme challenges being faced after more than 51 years of the Israeli foreign occupation of their land and the passage of more than 70 years since the tragic Nakba of the Palestinian people in May 1948. They also reaffirmed that supporting the realization of the Palestinian people’s inalienable rights to statehood and sovereignty, in line with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, bolsters the rights-based international system and defends it from current threats and efforts to undermine the international order.

4. The Ministers, in solidarity, decided to support the initiatives of the State of Palestine at the UN, including the multiple resolutions on the Question of Palestine that are annually presented within the various Committees of the UN General Assembly, and to act forthwith to coordinate positions to foster and mobilize the support of Member States. In this connection, they welcomed the election of the State of Palestine as Chair of the G77 and
China for the year 2019 and pledged their support. They stressed also the importance of the unity and support of the Member States of the NAM Caucus in the Security Council. They welcomed and called for support for the peace proposal presented by H.E. President Mahmoud Abbas to the Security Council on 20 February 2018, and supported his call for an international peace conference based on the longstanding parameters and terms of reference of the peace process in accordance with the relevant resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, and called for active efforts and coordination to advance this initiative.

5. The Ministers reiterated the urgency of providing support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), following the punitive and unjustified decision of the US Government to terminate its funding to the Agency. They denounced this decision, which not only targets the most vulnerable segment of Palestinian people by undermining the provision of vital humanitarian and development assistance to them but also threatens the entire region’s stability. They called on all States to increase support for the Mandate and the works of the Agency to ensure the uninterrupted provision of assistance to the Palestine refugees in all fields of operation and to ensure a dignified life for them and their families, pending a just solution to their plight in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and the Arab Peace Initiative, in line with the relevant General Assembly resolutions. They reaffirmed that UNRWA’s assistance is crucial for the protection, well-being and social resilience of the refugees and for the stability of these communities and their host countries, which is equally essential for preserving the prospects for peace and fostering its realization.

6. The Ministers stressed the need for urgent collective efforts to advance a just and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine on the basis of the relevant UN resolutions; to bring a halt to the grave violations of international law being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem; and to alleviate the hardships being endured by the Palestinian People in the absence of a just solution. They expressed grave concern that the lack of accountability for violations has further emboldened Israel’s impunity, destabilized the situation on the ground, and diminished peace prospects, and deplored any support to or cooperation with Israel’s illegal actions and impunity.

7. The Ministers called for increased efforts to mobilize international action, in a collective process, aimed at achieving, without delay, an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful solution based on the relevant UN resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Roadmap, stressing that a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine is central for establishing peace and stability in the Middle East and globally.

8. The Ministers reaffirmed their readiness to contribute to the achievement of a just and peaceful solution, and called for the intensification of international and regional efforts for
this objective, as called for by Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). They recalled in particular the responsibilities of the Security Council and the General Assembly, in accordance with the Charter and relevant resolutions.

9. The Ministers called for the urgent provision of political, economic and humanitarian support to assist the Palestinian People and support their efforts to realize their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and freedom in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and a just solution for the Palestine refugees, based on General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and to achieve genuine peace, security and coexistence. They reaffirmed their longstanding commitment and firm resolve to ensure support in this regard.

10. The Ministers received a comprehensive briefing from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine regarding recent serious developments and efforts to salvage the prospects for peace. They reaffirmed their grave concerns regarding the current situation and stressed the need for urgent action to mobilize the international community, including the Security Council, in accordance with its Charter duties, to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to cease completely all illegal settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem; all acts of violence, provocation and incitement, including at Al-Haram Al-Sharif; its more than decade-long blockade of the Gaza Strip; its arrest of Palestinians and abuse of Palestinian prisoners; all measures of collective punishment against the Palestinian civilian population; and all other illegal practices and human rights violations.

11. The Ministers expressed deep concern about the impact of the continued absence of a credible political horizon for justly resolving the conflict and realizing the rights of the Palestinian People. They deeply deplored Israel’s continuing intransigence and obstruction of peace efforts and entrenchment of its more than fifty-one-year military occupation via various illegal schemes and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem - the territory that constitutes the State of Palestine, and expressed grave concern about the consequent human rights crisis and protection crisis being deliberately inflicted on the Palestinian People, and the deepening insecurity and humanitarian and socio-economic suffering they are enduring.

12. The Ministers strongly condemned Israel’s military attacks against the civilian population in the besieged Gaza Strip, in grave breach of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law and the relevant provisions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The Ministers condemned the crimes committed by the occupying Power against innocent Palestinian civilians during the “Great Return March”, a large-scale peaceful civilian protest against Israel’s illegal occupation, oppression and dispossession of the Palestinian people that was launched on 30 March 2018. They deplored the killing by the
Israeli occupying forces of 160 Palestinians, including 23 children, and the injury of 15,500 people, many gravely wounded and permanently disabled.

13. The Ministers expressed deep regret regarding the failure of the UN Security Council to address the protection crisis being faced by the Palestinian people due to the veto cast by the U.S. Delegation on 1 June 2018. The Ministers stressed that failure to provide protection for the Palestinian people will lead to further escalation and tragically result in more bloodshed. They therefore welcomed the General Assembly’s adoption of resolution ES-10/20 on 13 June 2018, as a contribution to defusing tensions, deterring violence against civilians, and advancing consideration of measures to ensure the safety, well-being and protection of the Palestinian civilian population. They also welcomed the Secretary-General’s report (A/ES-10/794) containing proposals on various means for providing international protection to the Palestinian people. They committed to supporting Palestine in all of its efforts to follow-up on this important report at the UN.

14. The Ministers called for urgent efforts by States, individually and collectively, by all political, diplomatic and legal means, to hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for all of its violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including its illegal colonization measures and its grave human rights violations. They stressed the need for consequences for Israel’s ongoing violations and blatant contempt of the Security Council and General Assembly and the relevant resolutions. The Member States of the Committee that are Party to the Rome Statute also affirmed the importance of the International Criminal Court (ICC) for addressing the war crimes and crimes against humanity being committed by Israel against the Palestinian people, and emphasized the centrality of justice in bringing an end to such crimes and impunity.

15. The Ministers reiterated their call on all countries that have not recognized the State of Palestine to do so forthwith as an expression of their sincere commitment to peace based on the two-State solution and their respect for international law and legality. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed Colombia’s recent recognition of the State of Palestine. They stressed the importance of such actions in the current period as a contribution to preserving the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders and salvaging peace prospects.

16. The Ministers called on countries that have recognized the State of Palestine to publicly reaffirm that East Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Palestine. The Ministers also called on States to explicitly clarify that their recognition of diplomatic relations with Israel are also on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, and that no Israeli sovereignty is recognized over the 1967 line (1949 Armistice Line), including in East Jerusalem. They stressed that this too would be in line with their obligations under resolution 2334 (2016), specifically operative paragraphs 3 and 5 regarding non-recognition of any changes to the 1967 lines, including
with regard to Jerusalem, and calling on all States to make this distinction in their dealings with Israel, the occupying Power.

17. The Ministers recalled the Communiqué issued on 06 December 2017 by the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement in which it strongly denounced the provocative and unilateral decision by the US Government to recognize the City of Jerusalem as “the capital of Israel”, as well as the official move of the US Embassy from Israel to the City of Jerusalem on 14 May 2018, in contravention of international law, relevant United Nations resolutions and the Charter’s prohibition of the acquisition of territory by force.

18. In this connection, the Ministers also recalled the adoption of the General Assembly resolution ES-10/19 on 21 December 2017, reaffirming relevant resolutions; reiterating the call upon all States to refrain from establishing diplomatic missions in the Holy City of Jerusalem, pursuant to resolution 478 (1980) of the Security Council; and stressing that Jerusalem is a final status issue to be resolved through negotiations in line with relevant UN resolutions. The Ministers also acknowledged and welcomed the decision of the Government of Paraguay to reverse its decision to move its Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

19. The Ministers stressed that such illegal decisions and actions by the US will only serve to embolden Israel to further pursue its illegal policies and practices to further consolidate its control and unlawful de facto annexation of the City. Moreover, they strongly cautioned that such actions will exacerbate tensions, with potentially far-reaching repercussions. In this regard, the Ministers strongly deplored that the following has continued unabated: Israel’s settlement activities, including announcements and decisions on further settlement and Wall construction; the forced displacement of thousands more Palestinians, including Bedouin families and particularly in the areas of Occupied East Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley, including in the sensitive so-called “E-1” area, the latest being Khan al Ahmar-Abu al Helu and Abu-Nwar; the confiscation of huge tracts of Palestinian land; and the destruction of hundreds more Palestinian homes and properties to facilitate the expansion of Israeli settlements and the illegal Wall.

20. The Ministers denounced Israel’s illegal annexation plans, including the decision by the occupying Power on 1 January 2018 to annex the Occupied West Bank and impose Israeli “sovereignty” on illegal Jewish settlements therein, as well as to require the approval of 80 Knesset members (out of 120) to “return any part of Jerusalem to the Palestinians.” The Ministers also condemned and rejected the adoption of the so-called “Nation State Law” by the occupying Power, which explicitly endorses apartheid and ethnic discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinian residents of Jerusalem, but also aims to intensify Israel’s colonization, segregation and discrimination regime in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.
21. They welcomed the participation of several NAM Member States in the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference in support of UNRWA, held on 15 March 2018 in Rome, and urged continued follow-up and support for these efforts in light of the ongoing severe funding crisis being faced by UNRWA and the urgent appeals made by the Commissioner-General at the Pledging Conference held on 26 June 2018 and following the dramatic reduction in contributions by the Agency’s largest traditional donor. They stressed that such mobilization is a critical component of the efforts aimed at providing the Palestinian people with the necessary humanitarian, socio-economic and development assistance to alleviate the dire humanitarian situation that they continue to endure under the Israeli occupation, particularly in the Gaza Strip, and strengthen their national capacity.

22. The Ministers expressed their appreciation for the unwavering and personal commitment of H.E. Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in his capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), in upholding and advancing the Movement’s positions concerning Palestine, as demonstrated, among others, by his participation in the Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference of December 2017 and May 2018.

23. The Ministers called for the redoubling of international efforts, at the governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental levels, to realize these noble objectives as rapidly as possible, stressing that a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine is central for establishing peace and stability in the Middle East. They called for the follow-up and implementation of all proposed measures adopted in past Ministerial Declarations, Ministerial Meetings and Summits of the Movement regarding the question of Palestine, with a view to countering the recent negative and dangerous developments, enhancing solidarity with the Palestinian people and their leadership at this critical time, and salvaging the prospects for a just and peaceful solution.

24. The Ministers pledged to remain in constant contact and coordination, in order to uphold the principles and positions declared herein in support of a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine, and its attainment without delay, and in solidarity with the Palestinian People at this critical moment.

New York, 26 September 2018