

Multidimensional Impacts on Social Development and the Social Fabric; Innovative Solutions for Social Protection, Inclusion, and Justice: The Suffering of Palestinian Families Under Occupation.

Co-organized by the State of Palestine / Ministry of Social Development, State of Qatar, UNDP, and UNICEF

State of Palestine

1. Background and Context

For over five decades, the State of Palestine has endured a continuous military occupation marked by systematic violence, forced displacement, and blockade—particularly in the Gaza Strip. The recent escalations have led to an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe which caused a restriction on social development and dismantling the social fabric. Gaza has become the epicenter of this crisis, with more than 2.1 million civilians living under a suffocating blockade and facing an unprecedented military escalation that has displaced the vast majority and destroyed their homes and sources of livelihood. Simultaneously, the West Bank continues to suffer from intensifying settler violence, economic suffocation, and the deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure.

This side event, co-organized by the Ministry of Social Development, the State of Palestine, State of Qatar, UNDP, and UNICEF, aims to shed light on the urgent need to protect Palestinian families and rebuild the social fabric through a rights-based, shock-responsive social protection system grounded in justice, equity, and sustainability.

2. Why This Side Event is Urgently Needed

War and aggression have caused unprecedented destruction to Gaza's infrastructure and civilian facilities, further dismantling the foundations of social development and making urgent intervention in the Gaza Strip a critical necessity. This systematic destruction has resulted in the dismantling of the foundations of social development and the weakening of the Palestinian society's ability to adopt effective initiatives to reduce poverty, expand opportunities for full and productive national employment, and promote social inclusion as pillars for building resilient communities. The ongoing occupation obstructs all dimensions of social development through systematic policies of displacement, blockade, and deprivation. This reality has been gravely exacerbated by the war on the Gaza Strip and the intensifying aggression across the West Bank, including the direct targeting of infrastructure, civilian facilities, and essential service systems.

These practices collectively undermine the core principles of the Copenhagen Declaration and derail progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to poverty eradication, decent work, and inclusive societies.

This side event comes at a critical and unprecedented moment in the history of the conflict, following the latest escalation and war on Gaza, giving it a unique weight compared to previous events and forums. It is not merely a platform for dialogue, but an urgent call for concrete action and a rapid response to the humanitarian and developmental crisis. This event seeks to:

- Expose the systematic practices of occupation that restrict social development and dismantle essential services and the social fabric, thereby weakening national and global efforts to eradicate poverty, promote decent work, and foster social inclusion.
- Call on the international community to address the root causes of Palestinian suffering, rooted in occupation and protracted conflict, which fundamentally contradict the summit's vision for comprehensive social development and rights-based, resilient societies.
- Mobilize global partnerships and present justice-centered, scalable social protection programs and interventions that can bridge the gap between humanitarian and development responses, while supporting empowerment, social cohesion, and the reintegration of affected communities.

3. Strategic Importance of This Side Event

This event holds strategic importance for the following reasons:

- a) **Promoting coherent policy and protection frameworks** aimed at restoring the fragmented social fabric, eradicating poverty, addressing unemployment and providing decent work, and advancing inclusive social integration, and ensuring equitable access to essential services for all segments of Palestinian society in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

- b) **Positioning the Palestinian cause as a core component of the global social development agenda**, by advocating for shifts in international policy and upholding the principles of social justice, decolonization, and the universality of human rights, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Copenhagen Declaration.
- c) **Recovering from the occupation's systematic policies that restrict social development**, undermine basic services, and fragment the social fabric in Palestine, thereby weakening national and international efforts to eradicate poverty, promote decent work, and achieve social inclusion.
- d) **Highlighting scalable, real-world resilience models led by the Palestinian government**, such as the National Social Registry and the “Justice and Inclusion” Initiative, as leading examples of strengthening social protection systems in contexts of protracted crisis and occupation. A brief summary of these models—highlighting their achievements or future plans—can further ground them and make them more compelling.
- e) **Leveraging the event as a platform to announce new national priorities and flagship programs**—whether in reconstruction, psychosocial support, or economic empowerment—while reinforcing multilateral partnerships and mobilizing technical and financial resources for justice-based social recovery and development in Palestine.

4. Objectives of the Side Event

The event seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. **Highlight the multidimensional impacts of the occupation** on social development, which led to the disintegration of Palestinian families, psychological trauma, poverty, hunger, malnutrition, unemployment and loss of income sources, the destruction of basic infrastructure, and social exclusion, particularly among children, women, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and displaced populations. These effects have reached catastrophic levels in the Gaza Strip, where the most vulnerable groups have suffered the gravest consequences.
2. **Call for immediate international protection** as a foundation for any sustainable social development response.
3. **Strengthen partnerships and identify concrete examples of ongoing or planned initiatives and programs** through scalable solutions that provide integrated cash and in-kind assistance, financial empowerment, and community-based rehabilitation.
4. **Launch a global support platform to rebuild Palestinian society** through cooperative investments in responsive, justice-based social protection systems. This platform should be clearly articulated, including whether it will be tied to financial pledges or new, well-defined support mechanisms.

5. Key Themes to Be Addressed

The event will address the devastating and multidimensional impacts of the occupation while highlighting actionable and practical solutions, with a focus on the most vulnerable groups: children, the elderly, women, persons with disabilities, and those facing hunger and malnutrition.

Key Themes:

a) Forced Displacement and Home Demolitions: Assessment of the impact on housing security, personal safety, and access to basic services; discussion of scalable, community-based approaches to permanent housing and reconstruction. Special attention will be given to the immense challenges of rebuilding the Gaza Strip and the urgent need for a comprehensive and concrete international response plan.

b) Violence Against Women and Girls: Trauma recovery and reintegration programs that ensure dignity and safety.

c) Psychosocial Trauma and Family Breakdown: Community-led healing initiatives and intergenerational support mechanisms.

d) Collapse of Basic Services: Highlighting multidimensional deprivation in health, education, and WASH sectors. Specific examples from Gaza may be used to demonstrate the scale of the collapse and the urgent need for flexible, emergency-ready service delivery models.

e) Loss of Livelihoods: Economic empowerment through cash-for-work programs, small enterprise development, and vocational training. Emphasis will be placed on the unprecedented economic devastation in Gaza and the critical need for such programs to help residents restore their livelihoods.

f) Monetary Poverty: Provision of rights-based assistance anchored in the National Social Registry, ensuring targeted support for marginalized groups—particularly the elderly and persons with disabilities—through equitable and inclusive social protection mechanisms.

g) Restrictions on Personal Freedom and Self-Empowerment: Exploring the effects of military checkpoints, arbitrary arrests, and the shrinking of civic space; and identifying ways to restore self-empowerment, encourage civic participation, and rebuilding social cohesion for full social integration.

h) Erosion of Social Norms: Reviving community values through grassroots participation and restoring social inclusion and solidarity.

6. Key Stakeholders and Partners

This event will bring together a wide range of critical stakeholders, with a commitment to gender balance and inclusive representation of persons with disabilities and marginalized or affected communities:

- **UN Agencies:** UNSCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNRWA, OHCHR, UN Women, UNFPA, ESCWA, OCHA, WHO, WFP, ILO
- **Member States:** Key development partners such as Norway, Sweden, Brazil, South Africa, Belgium, Italy, and others
- **Civil Society Organizations:** Local and international NGOs working in human rights, social development, and humanitarian aid
- **International Entities:** League of Arab States, European Union, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, CEAPAD, and other development bodies
- **Academic and Research Institutions:** Experts providing evidence-based analyses and solutions
- **Affected Communities and Grassroots Representatives:** Ensuring the direct voices of impacted populations are heard

7. Expected Results

The event aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- **Position the plight of Palestinian families** on the official summit agenda as a top priority for international action and a key driver for achieving global development goals.
- **Adopt actionable and implementable recommendations** with clear follow-up mechanisms focused on inclusive and just social development and community rebuilding, while highlighting scalable solutions to address complex, multidimensional challenges, that aimed to eradicating poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion by empowering the most vulnerable groups, promoting transparency, supporting inclusive labor market policies, developing skills, and creating green economic opportunities, with a focus on integrating persons with disabilities, youth, women, and displaced persons.
- **Mobilize global humanitarian, technical, and financial support** for recovery and justice-centered interventions focused on Palestinian families. The event may serve as a platform to **launch a dedicated support fund** or issue a **financial pledging announcement** from participating states, enhancing its visibility and impact.
- **Formulating practical recommendations to strengthen social justice initiatives** that ensure the protection of rights, equality in access to services, and the reduction of gaps between social groups, with a focus on those most affected by war, assaults, and occupation. These initiatives aim to empower women, youth, persons with disabilities, children, and forcibly displaced persons by expanding participation in the labor market, improving access to education and training opportunities, and promoting social cohesion.
- **Strengthen long-term global partnerships** for rebuilding the Palestinian social fabric through strategic reforms, human-centered plans, and transformative programs. Emphasis will be placed on going beyond general support to **launching**

- a global support platform** for reconstructing Palestinian society through collaborative investments in responsive and justice-based social protection systems signaling a more integrated and strategic approach.
- **Underscore the event as a catalyst** for “strategic reforms, plans, and human-centered programs” that rebuild the Palestinian social fabric—setting it apart from initiatives focused solely on emergency relief.
 - **Expected results may include the issuance of a concluding document or Declaration of Principles** from the event, encompassing specific commitments, clear support mechanisms, and fact-finding references.

Tentative Agenda for 90-Minute Side Event

Time	Agenda Item
00:00 – 00:05	Screening of a short film: “Palestinian Families Under Occupation”
00:05 – 00:10	Opening Remarks – State of Palestine and State of Qatar
00:10 – 00:25	Voices from Palestinian Families: Survival and Hope
00:25 – 00:40	UN Agencies’ Perspectives – UNDP and UNICEF on integrated responses to multidimensional poverty and social protection within the SDGs framework
00:40 – 00:55	International Partners Panel (tentative) – EU, Norway Belgium, Spain Ireland: Supporting dignity and recovery through long-term development
00:55 – 01:10	Special Rapporteurs’ Interventions – Reflections on education, health, housing, GBV, food security, and personal safety
01:10 – 01:25	Interactive Q&A and moderated discussion with audience and panel
01:25 – 01:30	Closing remarks and Call to Action – Ministry of Social Development and UN representative