

**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**Thirty-first session
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**War on Gaza: tenets and essential elements
for sustainable recovery****Summary**

The present document provides an overview of the context and unprecedented impact of the 2023 war on the Gaza Strip. It also presents a synthesis of the lessons learned from recovery efforts that followed previous Israeli military escalations in Gaza, and the outcomes of the development approach employed by international development and humanitarian actors in the occupied Palestinian territory in general, focusing on some of the elements that stunted the effectiveness of past international humanitarian and development efforts. The document underscores some elements of the matrix of Israeli policies and practices; and the acquiescence of international actors thereto, and their inability or unwillingness to challenge those policies and practices that violate international law.

The document highlights the need for a new approach by international humanitarian and development actors to recovery in Gaza and the entire occupied territory. It proposes guiding tenets for such an approach, including Palestinian ownership and the application of international law. In addition, it presents several elements that are essential for any recovery efforts in Gaza, including strengthening Palestinian institutional capacity, enhancing humanitarian and development assistance coordination and collaboration, and focusing on indigenous drivers of recovery, namely the development of human capital, and control and full ownership of natural resources.

The Commission is invited to review the contents of the present paper and comment thereon.

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Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is mandated through its resolutions [326 \(XXIX\)](#) of 15 December 2016 and [330 \(XXX\)](#) of 28 June 2018 to monitor, analyse and document the repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian people, on their society, economy and infrastructure, and on the economic and social development potential of present and future generations. These resolutions also provide a mandate for ESCWA to monitor Israeli violations of the rights of the Palestinian people and international law, and to present reports to its member States thereon. Member States also requested the ESCWA secretariat, through a recommendation made by the ESCWA Executive Committee at its [eighth meeting](#) (Amman, 23–24 December 2021), to intensify efforts to support the vision of the State of Palestine on economic disengagement from occupation, including monitoring Israeli policies, assessing their impact on development, developing national policies to achieve disengagement, and strengthening the capacity of Palestinian institutions, particularly in the area of service delivery.
2. Based on the above, the ESCWA secretariat has undertaken activities to increase understanding of the context of the occupied Palestinian territory, by analysing Israeli policies and practices and their impact as an integrated system of control and domination, rather than analysing the impact of each policy or practice in isolation. By reflecting on this system's impact on the Palestinian economy's dependence on Israel and the increasing dependence of Palestinians on aid owing to deteriorating economic and social conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, ESCWA seeks to assist Palestinian institutions and local and international development bodies in development planning processes. The aim is to increase the effectiveness of development plans, projects and interventions in reducing the impact of the occupation, including Israeli policies and practices.
3. The complete scale and impact of the 2023 war on Gaza cannot be fully comprehended, especially given that it is ongoing at the time of writing the present paper. Until the war ends and its repercussions are fully assessed, ESCWA is seeking, within its mandate and scope of work, to formulate and suggest guiding tenets for international assistance and essential elements for any recovery development efforts in Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory. To this end, and in line with the findings of its research and normative work, ESCWA has conducted extensive internal and external consultations and sought input from a number of leading development experts to formulate the tenets and elements set out in the present document. These tenets and elements do not constitute a comprehensive framework or plan. They are a starting point that comes as a result of analysing and revisiting previous recovery efforts in Gaza, and drawing lessons from the successes and shortcomings of the development approach employed by international development and humanitarian actors in the occupied Palestinian territory.

I. Context

4. The 2023 war on Gaza came in the context of a protracted Israeli occupation, accompanied by a system of strict restrictions that have had a detrimental humanitarian, economic and social impact on the Palestinian people. This impact has been cumulative, multilayered and intergenerational, affecting Palestinian society, economy, governance and environment. It has manifested itself in deteriorated living conditions, forced displacement, social and economic de-development, entrenched asymmetric economic dependency on Israel, and greater Palestinian institutional dependency on foreign aid.
5. The situation in Gaza was dire well before the outbreak of the current war. Since 2007, Israel has imposed a blockade on Gaza, one of the most densely populated areas worldwide, in what may amount to collective punishment.¹ This blockade has affected every aspect of Palestinian life, and undermined freedom of movement and the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, such as the rights to an adequate standard of living, health, education, work and family life of Gazans.

¹ [A/78/127-E/2023/95](#), para. 52.

6. In addition to the blockade, Gaza has also been subjected to recurrent military escalations of varying intensity. Major hostilities occurred in 2008/2009, 2012, 2014, 2021 and May 2023. Before the current war, the most severe military escalation was in July–August 2014, which lasted for 50 days.

7. The impact of the escalations and the blockade went beyond direct loss of life, limb and property. Each escalation added to the suffering of Gazans, especially with the blockade hindering reconstruction and recovery. This meant that the devastating effects on infrastructure for basic services, economic activity and population well-being have been accumulating. The economy was decimated, its productive sectors destroyed, and the population became reliant on international aid. One of the most severely affected sectors was the health sector, which has been on the verge of collapse for years,² and was only able to survive owing to humanitarian aid.

8. The resulting conditions prompted the United Nations Country Team in 2017 to warn that by 2020, Gaza would be “unliveable”.³ By 2022, the situation of 29 per cent of households in Gaza was classified as “catastrophic” or “extreme”.⁴ Nearly 7 of 10 Gazans were poor, half of the workforce was unemployed, and 7 of 10 households were food insecure. The contribution of Gaza to the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory remained low at 17.4 per cent of real gross domestic product (GDP) in 2022, compared with 36 per cent in 1994, and its GDP per capita remains well below 1994 levels.⁵

II. 2023 War on Gaza: scale, impact and implications on recovery

9. The 2023 war on Gaza is unprecedented in the scale of death, destruction and human suffering, and in the immediate, medium- and long-term social and economic impact. The number of Palestinians forcefully displaced is more than twice that of the Nakba,⁶ noting that the new wave of displaced may also not be able to return to their homes.

10. To date, the casualties of the current war are more than triple those of previous military operations on Gaza combined.⁷ By 22 November 2023, approximately, 1,700,000 Palestinians (more than 70 per cent of the population) had been displaced within Gaza.⁸

11. Projections for and estimates of the impact of the current war on multidimensional poverty, human development, and labour markets are increasingly grim for Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory.⁹ Even if the war ends now, its impact will be intergenerational. Recovery, when it starts, will be slow and extremely difficult, given the immediate monumental humanitarian needs and the profound long-term impact of the devastation.

12. The level of destruction, including that of productive and other economic assets, will set Gaza back by many years. It will not only reduce GDP and its short-term growth, but will also have long-term economic

² [A/77/90-E/2022/66](#), para. 141; [A/76/94-E/2021/73](#), paras. 114 and 145; [A/74/88-E/2019/72](#), para. 108.

³ United Nations Country Team in the occupied Palestinian territory, [Gaza: ten years later](#), July 2017.

⁴ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), [Humanitarian needs overview: occupied Palestinian territory](#), January 2023.

⁵ [A/78/127-E/2023/95](#), para. 73.

⁶ The mass displacement in 1948, known as the Nakba (meaning “catastrophe” in Arabic), when more than 700,000 refugees and displaced persons were forced to flee their homes in mandate Palestine as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. It remains the longest unresolved refugee crisis worldwide. See United Nations, [UN marks 75 years since displacement of 700,000 Palestinians](#), 2023; UNRWA and UNHCR, [The United Nations and Palestinian refugees](#), 2007.

⁷ According to data from the [Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics](#) (accessed 23 November 2023).

⁸ OCHA, [Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel: Flash update #47](#), 22 November 2023.

⁹ [E/ESCWA/CL6.GCP/2023/Policy brief.1](#); and [E/ESCWA/UNDP/2023/Policy brief.1](#).

implications. Moreover, if previous efforts are to be taken as a reference, reconstruction and recovery will be slow, with severe consequences for economic activity, health, education, and long-term development prospects. For example, one year following the May 2021 offensive, only 200 of the 1,700 destroyed houses had been rebuilt.¹⁰ In addition to the large amount of financing required for reconstruction and recovery, a ban on dual-use building materials means that rebuilding efforts are unlikely to proceed at the necessary pace.

III. Planning for recovery and development: lessons learned

13. For recovery to be effective, it must address not only the unprecedented effects of this war, but also the cumulative effects of previous Israeli wars on Gaza, 16 years of blockade, and 56 years of military occupation. This necessitates learning from the experiences of 30 years of development and humanitarian assistance provided to the occupied Palestinian territory after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994. One main lesson that can be drawn in this regard is that by avoiding challenging the restrictive context of Israeli political and economic interests and objectives in the occupied Palestinian territory, the effectiveness of international recovery and development assistance was minimized.

14. Consequently, despite the direct involvement of the international community since the early 1990s and the provision of financial and technical aid to the occupied Palestinian territory, estimated at about \$45 billion,¹¹ the Palestinian economy remains extremely fragile, structurally weak, and highly dependent on Israel for trade, wage employment, and the provision of basic infrastructure. Unemployment, poverty and food insecurity among the 5.3 million inhabitants of the occupied Palestinian territory (3.2 million in the West Bank, and 2.2 million in Gaza) are widespread and alarmingly high.

15. The current war on Gaza is the most severe manifestation of the Israeli security/military approach to governing the occupied territory. Israel has waged five major military offensives against Gaza since 2007, in a context of decades of occupation, blockade, and stifling restrictions and policies. Each offensive compounded poverty, deprivation, food insecurity and unemployment, thus exponentially increasing immediate humanitarian needs and deepening aid dependency. Reconstruction and recovery efforts were unable to restore the social and economic infrastructure destroyed or damaged during those offensives.

16. The impact on Palestinian development of Israeli policies and practices, which are guided by its security approach, is cumulative. It should be viewed as the compounded results of previous escalations and security measures in the case of Gaza, and of decades of home demolitions, livelihood and infrastructure destruction, property confiscation, and various other restrictions in the West Bank. In parallel, operational and political considerations prompted international humanitarian and development actors to acquiesce to the “security-first” conditions as a matter of course. Development policies, programmes and strategies that might conflict with Israeli security concerns and interests were therefore dropped, since stakeholders understood that Israel would hinder their implementation, irrespective of its obligations under international law.¹²

17. Furthermore, Israel has deliberately prevented economic development in the occupied Palestinian territory. Harvard economist Sara Roy calls this “de-development”, defined as a process that forestalls development by depriving or ridding an economy of its capacity and potential for rational structural

¹⁰ Maram Humaid, “[A year on from war, Gaza frustrated at slow reconstruction](#)”, Al-Jazeera, 10 May 2022.

¹¹ Estimate covering the period from 1993, published in Jeremy Wildeman and Alaa Tartir, [Opaque and inaccessible: international donor aid funding to Palestine, 2017–2021](#), 2023.

¹² ESCWA, [Countering economic dependency and de-development in the occupied Palestinian territory](#), 2023; ESCWA, [Palestine Under Occupation III: Mapping Israel’s Policies and Practices and their Economic Repercussions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory](#), 2022.

transformation (that is natural patterns of growth and development), and preventing the emergence of any self-correcting measures. Over time, de-development presents nothing less than the denial of economic potential.¹³

18. The international assistance approach in the occupied Palestinian territory has remained within the boundaries of the framework set in the mid-1990s. At the time, that framework was considered a short-term solution, since the establishment of an independent Palestinian State was expected within a few years. There was thus limited consideration of the constraints inherent to the political, security and territorial context in the occupied Palestinian territory.¹⁴

19. Consequently, international and donor-supported recovery and development efforts in Gaza, and in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, were not able to counter the impacts of recurrent escalations and of the Gaza blockade, nor the deepening dependency of the Palestinian economy on Israel and on foreign assistance. As a result, the Palestinian economy has been fragmented and is undergoing de-development, given that its productive capacity has been eroded.

20. The failure of these international recovery and development efforts can be mainly attributed to their de-contextualization. Political and security considerations did not allow these efforts to tackle root causes of the socioeconomic debacle, namely the matrix of Israeli policies and practices, many of which are in violation of international law.

21. These dimensions, along with the question of the right to self-determination and other rights-based issues, were in reality attached to the political sphere, amid inability or lack of political will to enforce international law and implement Security Council resolutions in the occupied Palestinian territory. This disassociation of the development-humanitarian track from the rights-political-legal track significantly limits the space available for development planning and, at the same time, prevents addressing, even partially, the political causes of these limitations.¹⁵

22. A clear example in that regard is the question of development under Israeli restrictions on the freedom of movement of people and goods. Although freedom of movement is paramount for a sustainable recovery and for development, challenging them in the occupied Palestinian territory is considered strictly part of the political-rights-legal track. Therefore, the existing development approach does not allow challenges to these restrictions, despite their illegality under international law. Instead, development actors have pursued policies and practices that have either ignored the obstacles posed by mobility restrictions, or have attempted to achieve development under them.¹⁶

23. Furthermore, development actors and literature recognize that recovery and development efforts must be designed, constructed and managed by the Palestinian people and their institutions. However, most international assistance is provided according to recovery and development priorities that have been formulated elsewhere, and identified by donors' political, economic or other considerations, which may not be aligned with Palestinian objectives and needs.

24. In addition, Israeli control of all physical and financial flows to and from the occupied Palestinian territory has created a niche for economic benefits for Israel from international aid to Palestinians. This has

¹³ Sara Roy, Foreword, in Mandy Turner and Omar Shweiki, *Decolonising Palestinian Political Economy: De-development and Beyond*, 2014.

¹⁴ [E/ESCWA/CL6.GCP/2022/2](#).

¹⁵ ESCWA, *Countering economic dependency and de-development in the occupied Palestinian territory*, 2023; Sara Roy, *A Very Political Economy: Peacebuilding and Foreign Aid in the West Bank and Gaza*, 2000; European Commission, *Evaluation of the European Union's Cooperation with the occupied Palestinian territory and support to the Palestinian people*, July 2014.

¹⁶ ESCWA, [Countering economic dependency and de-development in the occupied Palestinian territory](#), 2023.

added another layer of complications to development and humanitarian assistance, whereby Israeli interests have become an additional factor that could veer aid away from Palestinian priorities and needs.

IV. Guiding tenets for sustainable recovery and development in the occupied Palestinian territory

25. The monumental effects of the 2023 war on Gaza should be met with a change in the humanitarian, recovery and development approach that matches its scale, in view of the context mentioned above. Moreover, any recovery, development or humanitarian approach should not absolve Israel from its obligations as an occupying Power towards the protected population living under its control, meaning all Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

26. The approach required, must address the following three interlinked dimensions: meeting mounting immediate needs; reapproaching long-term systemic development challenges; and addressing the root causes of the conflict, notably the non-application of international law.¹⁷

27. Such an approach is especially pertinent to international assistance. It needs to be articulated and developed among stakeholders, and guided by a set of principles. The aim of these guiding tenets is to ensure that development and recovery efforts are informed by lessons learned during the previous decades, but that also take into account an understanding of the processes of de-development and are rooted in international law.

28. Based on previous research and consultations, ESCWA proposes the following as preliminary guiding tenets for recovery and development in Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory.

A. Consolidate and support Palestinian ownership of all stages of recovery and development in the occupied Palestinian territory

29. Development actors and literature recognize that recovery and development efforts must be owned by the Palestinian people and their institutions. This entails that recovery and development planning, interventions and strategies are guided by Palestinian-identified priorities, needs and objectives, and coordinated through mechanisms also identified by Palestinians. In addition, international development actors should provide the support that Palestinian counterparts require to fulfil their roles in all stages of recovery and development planning and implementation. Moreover, ownership by the Palestinian people and their institutions entails supporting them in articulating and delivering their key messages to relevant regional and international development, humanitarian and advocacy actors, including those involved in their recovery and development needs.

B. Contextualize recovery and development to address the conditions resulting from the Israeli occupation, policies and practices

30. More rigorous and detailed understanding and contextualization are essential for effective recovery and development in the occupied Palestinian territory. This is due to the uniqueness of the development challenges posed by the prolonged Israeli occupation, policies and practices, which constitute the single greatest obstacle. This entails designing programmes and interventions, including allocating more space to situational analyses, within the wider context of protracted occupation. It also requires developing context-specific planning tools, including social, economic, cultural and environmental impact assessments.

¹⁷ ESCWA, [Palestine Under Occupation III: Mapping Israel's Policies and Practices and their Economic Repercussions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory](#), 2022; A/78/127-E/2023/95.

C. Employ an international law-based approach to recovery and development

31. Recovery and development efforts in the occupied Palestinian territory must contribute to the application of international law, mainly by challenging Israeli policies and practices that hinder humanitarian-development assistance, and violate Israeli obligations under international law. Instead of development programmes designed to incorporate or circumvent these policies and practices at the expense of effectiveness and relevance, such programmes should integrate legal means and standards to challenge and overcome hurdles posed by illegal Israeli policies and practices. Furthermore, as the right to self-determination is a prerequisite for development and the enjoyment of other rights, recovery and development programmes should be guided by this right and aligned towards its attainment.

D. Rethink Palestinian economic links internally and with the Arab region

32. Recovery and development efforts must be designed to contribute to rethinking the relationships between the fragmented parts of the Palestinian economy, and its links to natural and historical factors. Israeli policies and practices have resulted in the geographic fragmentation of the occupied Palestinian territory, leading to separate economies for each of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, all of which are dependent on Israel. The internal relinkage of the Palestinian economy must be coupled with its reintegration into the Arab region, so as to mitigate its isolation and decrease its dependency on Israel and on international aid.

V. Essential elements for Gaza recovery planning

33. The current scope and scale of damage and destruction in Gaza are unprecedented. OCHA indicates that the magnitude of the response and operational constraints are beyond what has been seen before in the occupied Palestinian territory and in other contexts.¹⁸ The scale is both qualitatively and quantitatively different from past hostilities, given the exponential impact of extensive crowding coupled with loss of homes, livelihoods, natural resources, infrastructure and institutional capacity. This impact is also systemic, as Gaza is left without what could be described as an "economy", with barely any means of production, self-sustainment, employment, or trade capacity. It will be dependent on assistance on a scale not seen since 1948, and on access to goods brought in through Israel.

34. It is unlikely that a conventional multilateral response framework can cope with these challenges, as it is usually based on assumptions such as the presence of adjacent areas for deployment of resources, the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, and the presence on-the-ground of State institutions and other assets for recovery, which have been destroyed and whose rebuilding is obstructed. OCHA has already reported that regular emergency programming for Gaza cannot continue, and that the situation requires new operational frameworks and modalities.¹⁹

35. In view of the above, and in line with the guiding tenets, the recovery phase for Gaza needs to become an effective launching pad and driver for the development efforts that are to follow. Planning for both phases should meet the above tenets, and also include the following elements.

A. Supporting Palestinians to articulate a comprehensive damage-loss-needs assessment that incorporates the ramifications of the conflict on people, assets and institutions

36. Needs and damage assessment processes, and the consequent identification of social, economic and governance recovery priorities, should be Palestinian in ownership, supported by multilateral, national, international and regional funds and programmes. The assessments must balance immediate needs with setting the ground for recovery. This involves the participation of surviving families of casualties, private owners of

¹⁸ OCHA, [Flash appeal for the occupied Palestinian territory 2023](#), 6 November 2023, p. 7.

¹⁹ Ibid.

property that was destroyed, and others who have been directly affected by the war. Assessing the needs of persons with disabilities, and the increase in such needs as a result of the war, should also be accounted for.

37. Palestinian ownership of needs assessments would minimize conflicting results that tend to arise when multiple actors conduct such assessments, owing to differing methodologies, timelines and systems. This would mitigate coordination challenges among recovery donors and with other humanitarian and development actors, and thus maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

B. Integrating the immediate-, short-, medium- and long-term humanitarian and recovery processes

38. Meeting the scale of immediate humanitarian needs during and in the aftermath of the war will be challenging and costly. Humanitarian efforts should be designed in a manner that sets the stage for the recovery phase. The unprecedented scale of death and destruction, and the cleanup of unexploded ordinance, mines and ruins, coupled with the cumulative effects of previous escalations and years of blockade, necessitate integrating immediate-, short-, medium- and long-term humanitarian and recovery processes and development planning.

39. While immediate- and short-term processes will have to address safety, stability and basic needs, long-term processes should focus on resilient and inclusive development. The latter must also consist of rebuilding, rehabilitation, and ensuring equal access to service networks and infrastructure, including cultural and heritage infrastructure.

C. Ensuring that planning for humanitarian relief, recovery and development are not bound by Israeli policies and practices, especially those that are in violations of international law

40. Israeli policies and practices, in addition to their immediate impact, have remained the main obstacle to recovery and development in Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory. Recovery planning should shift from accommodating policies and practices that violate international law to challenging them using legal and other means, including resorting to local and international courts and legal bodies.

D. Strengthening and supporting indigenous drivers of recovery, in terms of natural resources

41. Recovery planning for Gaza must be based on available and potential natural resources, including energy reserves such as oil and gas. This entails integrating steps to lift or bypass Israeli restrictions and other hinderances to the optimal development and utilization of these resources.

E. Focusing on strengthening human capital as a conduit for recovery

42. The damage to Palestinian human capital from the current war on Gaza goes beyond loss of life, brain drain, and infrastructure destruction. Along with the effects of the blockade and previous military offensives, the war has had a severe impact on the quality of and access to education, and has resulted in losses in schooling days. This, coupled with the psychosocial impact of the war and of deprivation on Gazan children, requires a focus on mitigating these detrimental effects. Recovery plans should therefore seek to restore what has been lost in terms of human capital, starting with accelerated education and rehabilitation programmes to save the generations impacted by war.

43. Palestinian and regional grassroot involvement is also an important asset to tap into. This involves facilitating and mobilizing Palestinian and other Arab grassroot resources and movements or individual initiatives to support the immediate deployment of needed capacities and of relief and rehabilitation efforts.

F. Ensuring the free movement of people and goods from and into Gaza

44. Freedom of movement remains paramount for a sustainable recovery. However, restrictions on the movement of people and goods have been a feature of Israeli policies in the occupied Palestinian territory, with the Gaza blockade being one of its harshest manifestations, and have stifled social and economic activity in the occupied Palestinian territory and led to its physical and economic fragmentation. Recovery planning must not only consider such restrictions, but also employ a dimension that seeks to remove them through political, legal or other channels.

G. Rebuilding the capacity of Palestinian institutions related to basic service delivery

45. The reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructure in Gaza related to basic services, including health, energy, education, WASH, telecommunications and transport are among the essential components of any recovery plan. However, in Gaza, this should be coupled with robust efforts to rebuild the capacity of Palestinian institutions in basic service delivery. These institutions have suffered physical destruction, the collapse of infrastructure during 16 years of blockade, and the inter-Palestinian divide, in addition to the devastation from past military escalations and the current war.

46. Rebuilding and further developing Palestinian institutions' managerial and technical capacities should be undertaken at the start of the recovery phase. This should be done across the various administrative levels, in tandem with established humanitarian-recovery priorities.

H. Improving national governance of recovery assistance

47. Given the magnitude of the devastation and its impact on people, there is a real need to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and trust in recovery efforts and processes. This entails rebuilding and ensuring Palestinian governance effectiveness. It also requires upholding transparency and ensuring participatory, inclusive and meritocratic practices and processes. The political will of key stakeholders should be dedicated to supporting the necessary governance systems and mechanisms to achieve these goals. Palestinian institutional infrastructure is required to ensure effective management and implementation of recovery plans.

I. Strengthening cooperation and coordination among the multilateral system and international humanitarian and development actors

48. Multilateral and international humanitarian actors and development aid providers should strengthen collaboration and coordination to ensure a quick deployment of immediate relief, optimize rehabilitation efforts, and maximize resources for longer-term recovery and development. Such coordination and collaboration should utilize and enhance existing mechanisms, especially those that include key Palestinian humanitarian and development stakeholders.

J. Developing a contextualized employment strategy and programmes that address the challenges posed by the occupation

49. Any employment strategy should be guided by "needs for resilience" and feasibility studies of what the occupied Palestinian territory, including Gaza, can produce and export. The resulting strategy should have a scenario in which production supply chains remain obstructed, and energy and water remain in meagre supply. The strategy should also include the possibility of granting preferential treatment to Palestinian products in Arab and other markets. This could entail exceptions from obstructive customs duties, taxes and other restrictions. Types of technical support programmes that lead to the improvement of Palestinian goods and services should also be examined.

VI. Conclusion

50. The 2023 war on Gaza is unprecedented in the scale of death, destruction and human suffering, and in its immediate-, medium- and long-term social and economic impact. A new approach that matches the effects of the war and that learns from the previous experience is needed for recovery and development in Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory.

51. For recovery to be effective, specifically in Gaza, it will have to address not only the unprecedented impact of the current war, but also the cumulative effects of earlier Israeli wars on Gaza, 16 years of blockade, and 56 years of military occupation. Based on previous experiences, and in line with the above-mentioned guiding tenets, ESCWA has proposed several elements as essential for any recovery and development efforts in Gaza.

52. These proposed guiding tenets and essential elements require further calibration, elaboration and articulation in the form of guidelines, checklists and other operational tools, so as to ensure more effective international assistance in recovery and development.

53. The process of developing the guiding tenets and essential elements to recovery could benefit from technical, facilitation and other facets of support, and from assistance in disseminating and advocating their application.

54. Furthermore, the war's gravity and impact necessitate mobilizing every type of support, including immediate short-term assistance for relief and recovery, and longer-term support for achieving development and addressing the root causes of the conflict. This includes mobilizing regional official, civic and grassroots support.

55. Security-based approaches to stabilize or govern the territories that Israel occupies will fail to achieve stability, and will certainly not be conducive to sustainable peace. Events have proven time and time again that there needs to be a peaceful resolution to the conflict, based on justice, international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.
