



Prime Minister's Office



Public Policies

2021-2023

This English-language version of the State of Palestine's National Development Plan: Resilience, Disengagement, and Cluster Development towards Independence (NDP 2021-2023) is based on the Arabic version approved by the Council of Ministers. Every attempt has been made to accurately reflect the intended meaning and spirit of that text. However, if any differences between the two versions exist, the Arabic version would take precedence.

National Development Plan

**Steadfast Resilience, Disengagement,
and Cluster Development Towards
Independence**



Public Policies

2021-2023





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Foreword

The National Development Plan: Resilience, Disengagement, and Cluster Development towards Independence (NDP 2021-2023) comes at a critical stage in the history of the Palestinian national movement. An agreement has been reached to rejuvenate the Palestinian political system through fair and free national elections. We have left behind the so-called Deal of the Century and its racist annexation plan. The Palestinian people have demonstrated their legendary support for their leadership and protection of their historic right to their land and statehood.

The Palestinian people are resilient. They will not be defeated nor submit to political and financial extortion. They will not accept any solution that is inconsistent with their lawful rights. The Palestinian people remain firmly attached to peace and are committed to ending the 54-year occupation of the Palestinian land and to finding an equitable solution to the refugee issue. Peace will ensure the Palestinian people's right to self-determination in their independent state, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Against this background, we look forward to working jointly with the new United States Administration to move the peace process forward and achieve the two-state solution by fully realising Palestinian statehood and fulfilling Palestinian rights. We also look forward to relations with the United States that are bilateral, and not centered on Israel's interests at the expense of the Palestinian people's rights.

In the midst of the global and local outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we have seen unprecedented solidarity within

the Palestinian people, both inside and outside Palestine. The pandemic has unleashed the potential of the Palestinian people and leadership. Despite the restrictions placed on us by the illegal occupation, the Palestinian government has purchased, and developed a robust plan to distribute, 2 million vaccines in order to immunize 2 million people over the coming three months.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, our world will never be the same. We must adapt, prepare, plan, and implement effective and efficient responses to the needs of affected citizens. We will continue to provide basic government services, including necessary health services, and implement the Economic Recovery Plan in the short and medium terms.

The “Government of All Palestinians” continues to ensure greater confidence between the government and our citizens and provide the best services under the possible, rather than ideal, circumstances. This is grounded in partnership, consultation, and integrated responsibilities. The government also works to enhance our people’s resilience on their land, in the absence of political prospects and in the context of wars waged upon us: war on geography and demography, war on recognition, war on the narrative, and war on our finances. Land is being confiscated on a daily basis. Israel refuses to recognize us as a state, seeks to undermine every effort to strengthen the foundations of our State, and fabricates history in Jerusalem, attacking our right to our Islamic and Christian holy shrines.

We refuse to continue to live in a de facto status quo. The creation of the Palestinian Authority (PA) as a transitional body was an achievement, but it does not meet the higher expectations of the Palestinian

people. We want this unsustainable status quo to end. It is our duty to change the functional role of the Palestinian government and move progressively towards fully realizing our statehood.

We want to make the cost of the occupation higher. We want the occupation to be neither convenient politically nor profitable economically. Therefore, the NDP 2021-2023 comes with a new development vision: Cluster development is built on progressive disengagement from, rather than welfare under, the occupation. The NDP 2021-2023 looks to eliminate the colonial structures, which Israel has systematically imposed on us since 1967. It maximizes the use of our human and financial potential and resources and ensures a balanced development among our governorates.

More importantly, without raising expectations, the government endeavors to regenerate hope among Palestinian citizens and ease political and economic frustration. Combined with US financial and political pressure, Israeli practices can result in destroying land, demolishing properties, and displacing the population. However, Palestinians cannot be defeated by these acts as long as they remain optimistically and profoundly committed to staying on their land. The upcoming phase of resistance against the divide and fragmentation will be based on the unity of our land, people, political system, and security establishment. It will be premised on one legitimacy and one law.

I would like to thank the civil society organizations (CSO), private sector, international partners, United Nations (UN) agencies, and - of course - staff members of line ministries and government bodies who have contributed ideas, vision, and advice on the best way to

move forward, promote, and advance development across the State of Palestine. Therefore, I call on all government bodies and our local and international partners to work together to face challenges and achieve desired goals. The NDP 2021-2023 is informed by 40 other concurrent documents, including sector strategies, cluster development plans, and a vision of development. Combined, these ensure development will be a leverage for national liberation.

Lastly, please allow me to express my thanks and appreciation to all medical, health, and security personnel. These are our frontline workers who confront the pandemic and protect public health. I also pay a resounding tribute to all the Palestinian people, particularly those who were infected by the disease during this pandemic and those who have suffered the loss of a relative or a friend. I would like to express my wholehearted sympathy with you and with the victims of the pandemic and their families.

Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh
Prime Minister





Chapter One

A New Development Paradigm

Chapter One

A New Development Paradigm

The NDP 2021-2023 is centered around a new development paradigm: cluster development and disengagement from the occupation. Cluster development allows us to leverage the competitive advantage of each of our governorates and capitalize on these advantages in economic terms. The economy is a leverage of politics: economic advancement and empowerment will move the liberation process forward, rather than maintaining welfare under the occupation. Therefore, cluster development is closely linked to progressive disengagement from the occupation and ending economic dependence, imposed de facto on us as a result of Israeli colonial policies. Disengagement from the occupation must be accompanied by promoting and supporting national products to be competitive and provide alternatives. It also involves openness to the global market and improvement of the depth and breadth of our relations with the Arab region.

If disengagement from the occupation is the first headline of the economic programme, the second is to work towards modifying the Palestinian economic model. This is based on bringing about a shift in educational outcomes, nature of business, and employment opportunities. Accordingly, the development process supports Palestinians' resilience on their land and makes better use of human resources, both in Palestine and in the diaspora. In addition to consolidating national unity, development will further promote the role of the youth, empower women, and achieve equality and social justice.

Our vision of development is anchored in the fact that the Palestinian people have the right to self-determination and are entitled to and have sovereignty over their land. Israel is a colonial state, against which the International Law allows resistance in order to end the occupation and fully realize the State of Palestine. The development of Palestine is based on the fact that Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Palestine. No political solution is tenable without a just solution to the refugee issue. Our vision of development is also premised on a connection between electorate and elected to ensure that Palestine is a democratic state, in which fundamental rights and public freedoms are duly respected. Democratic Palestine must be without all forms of discrimination on the basis of religion, race, and gender, with a competent civil service that is accountable and free of nepotism, cronyism, and corruption.

By launching the NDP 2021-2023, the 18th government under the leadership of Dr. Mohammed Shtayyeh aims to promote industrial, agricultural, and tourism production, reduce unemployment, fight poverty, and enhance the role of women and youth. The government will increase interest in technical and vocational education and training (TVET), uphold public rights, bolster transparency, strengthen and construct industrial parks, and create development-oriented entrepreneurial ventures, start-ups, and technology and business incubators. The government will work to promote investment in clean energy, pay attention to water sources, and lay the ground for national collective action to strengthen the resilience of citizens by improving health, education, economy, social protection, and other basic services that are critical to people's lives.

Cluster Development

Cluster Development involves the bundling of Palestinian geographies, including relevant economic, institutional, educational and other activities, into interlinked clusters to achieve the overall national goal. Everybody contributes to realising this goal, with the participation of all development partners, namely, the government, local government units (LGU), private and civil sector, universities, and donor community.

Cluster planning can contribute to improving the macro economy by leveraging the competitive advantage of each of our governorates and optimising these advantages in economic terms. In our cluster planning, a cluster comprises a governorate within its geographical boundaries. In this way, every governorate has a cluster that focuses on its characteristics and dominant economic activity, developing, building on, and producing the needed cumulative impact to achieve development. Jerusalem comprises the Capital Cluster. The Jenin and Qalqiliya governorates are renowned for agriculture, as Hebron and Nablus are for their industry. While Bethlehem is specialized in tourism, Gaza is centered on everything that relates to the sea, marine science, fisheries, fishing industry, and seawater desalination. Ramallah and El-Bireh are a financial, service, and information and communications technology (ICT) hub.

Cluster development can ensure comprehensive development is initiated throughout the regions and segments of the Palestinian people. Rather than being vertically limited to a single area, cluster development places a focus on horizontal expansion to cover various

Palestinian geographies. Territorial development enables us to focus on some areas to help capitalize on available opportunities, such as the Jordan Valley and the Gaza Strip coast. Territorial development also has the potential to provide needed coverage and deal differently with the city of Jerusalem, promoting its role as the capital of the State of Palestine.

The new development concept is premised on the promotion of overlapping and functional interplay between clusters. In addition to vertical progress within a single cluster, the new development model helps to improve horizontal collaboration and advancement with other clusters, promoting common good. Accordingly, development allows for the optimal use of complementarities among clusters, reducing cost and increasing productivity through specialization. In addition, the new development model ensures the continuity, availability, coordination, and complementarity of public services, contributing to saving and rationalising money and efforts.

Cluster development can also bridge gaps between various Palestinian areas, by opening rural areas, Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem to new and targeted investments and providing financial facilities and concessionary loans to these regions. This means that there is an important role for the financial sector and donor community in supporting inclusive economic development and the infrastructure needed to create an enabling economic environment. Funds will be earmarked to support, rather than obstruct, development planning.

Disengagement from the occupation

Cluster development is not a magic formula that can overcome the problems and challenges imposed by the occupation. In spite of our tireless efforts to resolve technical and sector predicaments, the occupation is an insurmountable obstacle to any development plan. The proposed development model is not, therefore, an alternative to our primary goal: putting an end to the occupation and compulsory economic dependence on Israel. Rather, this model contributes to this primary goal by aiming to raise the cost of the occupation in order to end it. This means transforming the economy and development process, including various sectors, to serve the liberation programme. Hence, cluster development and disengagement from the occupation is organically intertwined in the new vision of development. We are convinced that the only path to achieving progress in the development process is the gradual disengagement from the occupation and the breaking free of the colonial domination forcibly imposed on us. Disengagement from the occupation is in pursuance of the resolutions of the 23rd session of the PLO Central Council, 2018.

Accordingly, based on public-private partnership, the NDP 2021-2023 seeks to correct economic and social distortions created by the occupation. It resists policies that have made the Palestinian market dependent on Israel. While relying more on manpower than on skilled and specialized employment, the Palestinian economy has been more service-oriented than production-based. Therefore, it is important to strengthen our ability to implement high quality projects, achieve coherence between theoretical development frameworks, policies, projects, and public budget, and create an early warning system for crisis response.

Disengagement from the occupation is part and parcel of the liberation strategy. Separation includes, inter alia, the pursuit to gradually and increasingly immunize the Palestinian land occupied in 1967 against any Israeli aggression and reduce linkages between the Palestinian and Israeli markets. The rights and capacities availed to Palestinians by the signed agreements will be tapped to the fullest extent. Work will continue to realize other rights, either by reconsidering these agreements, creating facts on the ground, or communicating with regional and international actors, particularly our fellow Arab countries.

Promotion of national products

Disengagement from the occupation can only achieve development and liberation goals when it is backed by an integrated planning process to promote and protect national products. Access to global markets will be a target for Palestinian exports. In particular, our Arab ties will be further consolidated through direct economic relations.

Cluster development is grounded in strengthening, supporting, and enhancing the competitiveness of national products. Palestinian products can, therefore, be rightly placed in and fulfill the needs of the domestic market. The market cannot be left to define the economic landscape. The economy will be directed to productive sectors, mainly agriculture and industry, and will develop public goods and services. This also requires the development of economic structures as well as hard and social infrastructure, which are capable of promoting and expanding the productive base of the economy, stimulating production, and driving economic growth, serving the comprehensive development process towards independence.

Investment in human resources

Success of cluster development lies in its ability to stimulate the economy and create new employment opportunities that meet the increasing demand for work due to natural population growth. Cluster development will promote citizens' resilience on their land and reduce potential brain drain. Investment in human resources also requires that investments be channelled to employment-generating sectors and domestic basic needs be met.

Hence, the educational curriculum needs to be subject to a serious review. This is indispensable to adapt education to scientific and technological breakthroughs. It is also necessary to achieve gender balance in the curriculum. Review of education helps us focus on quality education, based on thinking and innovation rather than on memorization and indoctrination. Multilevel education will be premised on mutual learning and incorporate attention to health, financing, and economy activities and issues, keeping away from one-sided transfer of knowledge.

There is also a need to align education to employment and opportunities furnished by the labor market, ensuring contribution to development. Education is supposed to provide a route out of poverty or a means of maintaining an acceptable economic status. In this NDP 2021-2023, the government attaches special importance to TVET and the handicraft industry, which will be aligned with the labor market needs. The NDP 2021-2023 also promotes light industries associated with tourism and agriculture.

This vision is also informed by the optimum exploitation of human resources through a focus on employing and unleashing the potential of the youth, empowering women to play a leading role in society and economy, and laying the foundations for productive – not consumer – households and society.

Strengthening of Palestinian resilience

Including the cluster development model, the NDP 2021-2023 is tailor made to create a resistance economy, which is immune to penetration and dependence, strengthens people's resilience on their land, and contributes to liberation. The mission of development is to promote resistance-based resilience of Palestinians on their land, build national institutions that provide leverage for ending the occupation, and advance the comprehensive reform of existing institutions. Planning will be designed to promote economic, political, cultural, and social structures. It will lay the foundations for achieving national goals, namely, ending the occupation, establishing the modern, democratic and independent Palestinian State, fulfill the dream of Palestinians in the diaspora of returning to and building their homeland, and upgrading the status of Palestinian citizens. In this way, Palestine will be a civilised, progressive state, one that is inclusive and far removed from all forms of discrimination, where no one lives on the margins of society.

Permanent development is premised, inter alia, on harnessing and providing new sources of energy. Improving environment quality also makes Palestine greener and contributes to developing alternative energy sources. In a spirit of collective and global responsibility, the

NDP 2021-2023 attaches particular importance to climate change and all forms of environmental pollution. Conscious of the responsibility towards current and future generations, the NDP 2021-2023 also pays special attention to natural resource management and sustainability. This document, together with sector and crosscutting strategies and cluster development plans, has been developed in full partnership with, and involving the collective effort of, government bodies, LGUs, CSOs, private sector, academic institutions, and development partners. Consultation, rather than prescription, is the password to national planning, while at the same time focusing on detailed and realistic sector and territorial planning.

Box 1: NDP 2021-2023 Methodology

In the last quarter of 2019, the government launched a comprehensive process to upgrade the National Policy Agenda (NPA) and sector and crosscutting strategies. Initiated three years after these documents had been released, the process had to review and update the NPA and sector and crosscutting strategies so that they take account of the government approaches and priorities. The update exercise was preceded by a midterm review of the NPA and sector and crosscutting strategies in coordination with all line ministries and government bodies. Targeting the NPA and strategies, the update process involved a number of main activities:

- Launched a process to update the NPA and sector and crosscutting strategies on 29 November 2020. In a meeting between the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and deputy chairs of planning and budget teams at relevant government bodies, the timeframe and working mechanism to updating the NPA and strategies was agreed.
- Developed and rolled out a guidance note on the update of sector and crosscutting strategies to all stakeholders. This guide set eight issues and pillars to be observed in the process of updating strategies, namely, government adoption of cluster development, new development priorities, midterm review results, improved public service delivery, geographical dimension, crosscutting

issues, realistic strategies, and State of Palestine's obligations under international conventions and treaties.

- Held a series of meetings with deputy chairs of planning and budget teams to deliberate on the Updated Priorities and Policy Interventions.
- Held meetings with deputy chairs of planning and budget teams and planning officers at relevant government bodies to review and discuss the guidance note and annexed tables, as well as monitor the progress on strategy updates.
- Organized a series of consultative meetings with local and international partners. These included ad hoc encounters with CSOs, youth organizations, private sector entities, UN agencies, and donor community. In the meetings, the draft updated matrix of NPA priorities and policy interventions were reviewed and discussed.
- Updated all 25 sector and crosscutting strategies in consultation and coordination with partners across the government and beyond.
- Established a team of independent experts to support the review of draft sector and crosscutting strategies on the basis of an assessment model designed specifically for this purpose. The review process examined the quality of strategies and compliance with the criteria and principles outlined in the guidance note.
- Provided government bodies in charge of strategy updates with a set of detailed comments on the basis of the assessment

- model mentioned above. Accordingly, government agencies modified strategies in accordance with these observations.
- Presented final versions of strategies for examination and later submission to the Council of Ministers for approval.
 - Based on the outcomes of consultations and sector and crosscutting strategies, developed and submitted the draft NPA to the Council of Ministers.
 - Modified and approved the draft NPA, with 40 other concurrent documents, by the Council of Ministers under the title National Development Plan: Resilience, Disengagement, and Cluster Development towards Independence (NDP 2021-2023).

The draft NDP 2021-2023 was mainly informed by *Palestine: A New Development Model*, a book authored by the Palestinian Prime Minister. The draft NDP 2021-2023 was also premised on internal PMO policy documents and previous national planning process.

After the NDP 2021-2023 is adopted, the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, jointly with government bodies, will update the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) and action plans in consistence with the NDP 2021-2023.

In submitting to you this NDP 2021-2023, we are aware that words are nothing but a springboard to our action. To be meaningful, these words should be translated into sustainable actions that nurture hope in the future and improve the lives of our people sooner rather than later.

Response to the COVID-19 pandemic

During the preparations for launching the NDP 2021-2023, the government has faced - with determination, persistence, and wisdom - a global pandemic that endangers citizens' lives and threatens the health sector. In the first year of the pandemic (until 8 March 2021), a total of 2,387 people died. The cumulative number of cases were 224,906, with 200,179 people recovered from the virus.

The government has been responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, using a pre-emptive and precautionary approach. Together with relief and economic recovery exercises, plans have been in place to deal with the impact of government measures taken to reduce and contain the outbreak of the pandemic. This has required that the NDP 2021-2023 be updated through a set of frameworks that lay out the global and local context of the pandemic. Hence, we need to continue to coordinate efforts and provide resources to contain the pandemic, deliver public services, and prevent the total collapse of the economy or threat to fiscal stability.

In addition to continued support to the health sector, within the general framework for dealing with the consequences of government measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, government efforts have focused on another three main areas: (1) assistance to poor households and affected workers; (2) aid to affected small and medium enterprises (SME); and (3) ongoing implementation of the Economic Recovery Plan. The government has also worked towards improving the infrastructure needed to maintain the educational process. The government has adopted an integrated education model, featuring

both online and face-to-face sessions, to ensure that damage is not caused to primary, secondary, and higher education. The government has issued many documents outlining its rapid response plan in these areas. All these actions have been implemented under extraordinary financial and political circumstances, including a suspension of US support, Israeli financial siege, and overall uncondusive political environment.

Interventions targeting poor households have included increasing benefits within the framework of cash transfer programmes with a view to improving support, albeit temporarily, to already vulnerable households or those affected by the crisis. The cash programme has been implemented to promote public health services and support the health sector with temporary health workers. Palestinian workers returning from the Israeli labor market have been supported through funds withheld by the Israeli government.

Policy interventions in support of the private sector included a corporate survey to assess needs according to sectors, enabling the government to channel relevant support to targeted entities. The government has also prioritized arrears payments to SMEs with a view to securing needed liquidity; supported companies by subsidising salaries or supporting capital in a way that would reduce layoffs; reviewed price monitoring measures, ensuring that the provision of necessary commodities is not affected; guided efforts made by the Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency to keep current investors in Palestine; and reviewed administrative processes weighing on SME businesses. Particularly nonfinancial conditions have been removed, albeit temporarily.

The government has started to implement some emergency policy interventions, which will continue to be reviewed in light of the Palestinian Economic Recovery Plan in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic Challenges. The Plan takes into consideration interconnected and complex challenges and problems, which require additional efforts by all development partners, rather than by government bodies alone. In the first place, the Economic Recovery Plan diagnoses economic consequence of COVID-19 in Palestine in light of available data. Second, it provides a review of government, local, regional, and international interventions impacting the Palestinian economy. Finally, under several potential scenarios, the Plan presents a set of economic and fiscal policies and processes, which the Palestinian government and other actors need in order to respond to the crisis in its various dimensions in the short, medium, and long terms. Accordingly, the Economic Recovery Plan promotes the concept of integrated relief and development planning.

The Economic Recovery Plan draws a dividing line between (available and already used) necessary measures. This distinction provides an important entry point to suggest targeted interventions and measures to help the economic sectors most affected by the pandemic recover and ensure social protection requirements for groups most in need and vulnerable to the financial crisis. The Plan further proposes needed interventions, focusing on required interventions at two main levels: (1) macro policies (fiscal, monetary, banking, trade, employment, and social protection policies and measures); and (2) sector policies (industry, agriculture, tourism, and domestic trade). The Economic Recovery Plan lays the ground for proposing required interventions by

formulating a strategic framework for the desired development model, namely, cluster development as a leverage for the national project aiming at independence and ending the occupation.







Chapter Two

National Priorities and Policies

Chapter Two

National Priorities and Policies

The NDP 2021-2023 seeks to outline realistic policy directions, which ensure promoting resilience, as well as improving and upgrading the quality of life of our people at this critical stage. At the same time, the NDP 2021-2023 places an emphasis on achieving our ultimate goal of gaining freedom and independence. This constitutes the basis for ending the vicious circle, which deprives us of making optimal use of the resources and potential of our Palestinian State. Focusing our effort on effective and efficient national development will provide leverage for the national project and form the basis for promoting resilience of our people in their towns and on their land in the current circumstances. Combined, these contribute to creating a catalyst of development and the driving force for growth. Our faith in our cause is deep-rooted. We possess an empowered human capital, adding momentum to and making the development process capable of transforming the path and pattern of development. In Palestine, development has not been given a real chance. Palestine has not assumed its national, regional, or international role in view of massive challenges and risks, which must be countered by means of a comprehensive national strategy and effective tools.



The NDP 2021-2023 revolves around a vision grounded in: (1) Ending the Occupation; (2) Excellent Public Service Provision; and (3) Sustainable Development.

Our Vision

Ending the occupation is a long path of struggle, with no definite timeframe. However, since the Declaration of Independence of 1988, the Amended Basic Law of 2003, towards the release of the NDP 2021-2023, we have clearly and unequivocally determined our destination, namely, to achieve our paramount goal of freedom and independence.



Box 2: Our Vision

Palestine is an independent Arab state with full sovereignty over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, established within the borders of the land occupied by Israel in June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Palestine is a democratic state that honors human rights and ensures for its citizens equal rights and duties. Its population live in a safe environment under the rule of law. Palestine works towards ensuring equality between men and women and values highly its social capital, social cohesion, and solidarity. Palestine is characterized by Arab Palestinian culture, human values, and religious tolerance. Palestine is a progressive state and appreciates amicable relations with other states and all members of the international community. The Palestinian government is open, transparent, responsible, and responsive to the needs of, and ensures effective service provision to, its citizens. The government creates an enabling environment for the private sector to develop and grow. Palestinian human resources are the driving force of national development. The Palestinian economy is open to other economies around the world. It seeks to produce competitive, high value, and high quality goods and services. In the longer term, the Palestinian economy aspires to a knowledge-based economy.



Pillar 1: Ending the Occupation

Liberation is a cumulative process that leads to independence and ending the occupation. The occupation is the primary roadblock on the path towards the independent State of Palestine, which lives in peace side by side with its neighbors. Over the years, the Palestinian government has not been able to progressively disengage from this colonial control and has become more economically dependent on Israel. This dependence is not voluntary: it is enforced by Israel through force of arms, aggression, and arbitrary security and economic measures. Disengagement must be in conjunction with efforts to end the occupation.

What Israel wants is to perpetuate the status quo and maintain its policies and intransigence, posing a threat to the internationally agreed consensus on the two-state solution. This would lead to imposing an apartheid-based solution, where millions of Palestinians would live without enjoying their fundamental human rights and democratic entitlements. To avoid this catastrophic scenario, all parties have the duty to work hand in hand to replace the “Israeli facts on the ground” by establishing the fully free independent Palestinian State as a tangible reality on the ground and on the international stage.

With the conviction that most problems and challenges are essentially imposed by the occupation, any attempts to resolve socioeconomic impediments will inevitably be blocked by this reality. However, the only way ahead is through progressive disengagement from the occupation. This means transforming the economy and development

process, including various sectors, to serve the liberation programme by raising the cost of the occupation in order to end it.

Pillar 1 of the NDP 2021-2023, Ending the Occupation, includes the following national priorities and policies:

Pillar 1: Ending the Occupation	
Priorities	National Policies
1. Disengagement from the Occupation; Embodiment of the State	1. Mobilizing National and International Support 2. Holding Israel to Account
2. Ending the Divide and Achieving National Unity	3. One Land; One People 4. Upholding Democratic Principles
3. Strengthening Palestine's International Status	5. Broadening Palestine's International Participation 6. Expanding Palestine's Bilateral Relations

1. Disengagement from the Occupation; Fully Realizing the State

To counter the Israeli colonial policy and resist the annexation and expansion agenda embraced by the Israeli occupying government, we, as Palestinians, have to join forces and unite efforts to attain and impose independence as a fact on the ground by means of gradual disengagement from the occupation and support to cluster development.

This also requires mobilizing support from the international community to put an end to the unlawful and immoral occupation and colonization of our land. The right to resist the occupation through lawful means is enshrined in International Law. Any Palestinian vision of development must be based on a fundamental principle, stating that Palestinians have the right to self-determination and have sovereignty over their land.

Therefore, the Palestinian leadership's adoption of a peaceful approach to attaining our right to freedom and independence requires not only a persistent effort by Palestinians but also unrelenting efforts by the international community to hold Israel to account, through increased political, economic, legal, and financial pressure, for its violations as a colonial regime.

Accordingly, the strategies used by the Palestinian leadership to confront the occupation have included resistance (in all its internationally legitimate forms), peace negotiations, and internationalization of the conflict. The world has shown interest in recognising the State of Palestine on the 1967 borders through a UN vote on 29 November 2012.

Palestine has further acceded to international organizations and ratified international conventions.

National Policy 1: **Mobilizing National and International Support**

In every previous national plan, we have reiterated our Palestinian national programme and right to full sovereignty over our national soil on the 1967 borders. We have highlighted the importance of putting an end to Israel's unlawful, systematic, and persistent expropriation of our land and natural resources. We have stressed the need to lift the protracted blockade on the Gaza Strip, ensure its territorial contiguity with the West Bank, eliminate Israel's fanatical attempts to isolate East Jerusalem from the rest of Palestine, and dismantle the Wall that besieges tens of thousands of Palestinians.

If the two-state solution is to be applicable, the Palestinian State needs to be a single integrated geographical, political, legal, cultural, and economic unit. We believe that solidarity in exerting pressure on Israel by the international community, jointly and severally, can put an end to the Israeli colonization of Palestine once and for all.

In the absence of a partner who is willing to implement the two-state solution, Palestine is determined to engage the international community of nations to support the strategy of realizing the Palestinian State. This strategy will chart the course for a transition from a Palestinian state under colonizing occupation to an independent and sovereign State of Palestine. To this avail, we will extend our authority over the whole of Palestine within the 1967 borders, including East Jerusalem as its

capital. We will exercise our powers over all sectors as a sovereign state. We will work jointly with our fellow Arab states and implement plans that bolster political and economic ties between Palestine and the Arab and international communities. We will also work with the international community to decide on and implement the practical steps needed to develop the capacities and functions of a sovereign state: border control, air space management, energy exploration, development, etc.

Against this background, National Policy 1 comprises a broad range of measures tailored to ensure the engagement of the international community to remedy the historical injustice done to us.



Box 3: National Policy 1

Mobilising National and International Support

Through the following policy interventions:

- Reassert sovereign over the whole of the State of Palestine within the 1967 borders, including East Jerusalem, as well as over its natural resources and land, air, and marine borders, and put in place the legal foundations to realize this sovereignty.
- Confirm and develop East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine.
- Lift the siege on the Gaza Strip and ensure its territorial contiguity with the West Bank.
- Mobilize international support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and right of return and to achieve the release of prisoners, and internationalize the conflict on the basis of the relevant international terms of reference.
- Increase political, legal, economic, and grassroots pressure at local and international levels to end the colonizing occupation.
- Develop and implement plans to promote Palestine's political and economic ties to the global community, particularly with the Arab region.
- Prepare Independence Transition Plans that chart the steps towards asserting full Palestinian authority over all of Palestine in all sectors of a sovereign state.



National Policy 2: Holding Israel to Account

The world has long admitted that the colonization of, and abuses against, Palestine constitute a violation of the provisions and rules of International Law. Many UN resolutions and relevant international legal decisions have confirmed beyond reasonable doubt that the Israeli colonization is unlawful. Examples of such resolutions and decisions include:

- In its 2004 Advisory Opinion, the International Court of Justice announced that the Wall construction is in conflict with International Law. Israel has the obligation to cease the works of construction of the Wall, dismantle those parts of that structure, provide compensation or other forms of reparation for the Palestinian population.
- In a 2014 resolution, the UN Human Rights Council condemned the “widespread, systematic and gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms” arising from the Israeli military operations, which may amount to international crimes, in the context of the military aggression launched by Israel on the Gaza Strip.
- In the historic UN Security Council Resolution 2334 of 2016, by 14 votes in favor and with the US abstention, the Security Council reaffirmed that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian land occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, had no legal validity. In the same resolution, the UN Security Council reiterated its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian land, including East Jerusalem.

- In its decision of 5 February 2021, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) confirmed that the Court's territorial jurisdiction in the Situation in Palestine extends to the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, namely Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Subsequently, on 3 March 2021, the ICC Prosecutor confirmed the initiation of an investigation in respect to the Situation in Palestine. The investigation will cover crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court that are alleged to have been committed in the State of Palestine since 13 June 2014.

The time has come for the international community to take action and put into effect the successive international resolutions, which denounce the Israeli colonization of Palestine, by taking steps to ensure that Israel comply with the International Law. As Palestine confronts apartheid and colonization, South Africa's long march towards freedom and legitimacy demonstrates to both Palestine and the international community what can be achieved once the world community of nations decides to cooperate and act resolutely to lift the historical injustice done to any people. The situation in which Israel views itself as above the law cannot continue without consequences.

We are mapping out important strategies to strengthen efforts to hold Israel accountable. Israel continues to violate Palestinian economic rights, and global economic pressure is building up on Israel, thanks to the efforts made by peace and freedom-loving actors around the world. Mechanisms need to be in place to hold Israel to account, particularly when it unjustifiably deducts Palestinian government revenues.

It is necessary to continue to combat and prevent Israeli exports that

use the name of Palestine, particularly settlement products, from accessing regional and international markets. The resolution adopted by the European Union in 2015 requiring the labelling of goods produced in Israeli settlements, confirmed by the European Court of Justice in 2019, was an important and welcomed step. The resolution provides consumers the option not to buy Israeli settlement products. As a result, settlement goods do not enjoy the customs exemptions applicable to other products.

Equally necessary, global corporations that manage investments in, benefit from, operate in, or deal with settlements as if they were part of Israel must be prosecuted. Hence, we welcome the UN resolution of February 2020, which published a list of 112 of companies doing business with Israeli settlements. We hope that this resolution be delivered on to prosecute those corporations on the basis of the International Law and international due process.

Palestinians are required to promote resilience in resistance of the Israeli colonization on all political, economic, legal, and financial fronts. This should be in conjunction with efforts to place pressure on Israel by the world at large. Therefore, we call on the international community of nations to work together to increase pressure on Israel to end its colonization of our land. Here, we should emphasize that equitable implementation of the two-state solution will contribute to changing the international geopolitical landscape for the better in favor of all parties.

Box 4: National Policy 2

Holding Israel to Account

Through the following policy interventions:

- Utilize international tribunals and other mechanisms for opposing colonialism and apartheid against Palestine.
- Urge other nations to uphold their obligations under International Law with respect to ending the colonial Israeli occupation.

2. Ending the Divide and Achieving National Unity

Our historical march to freedom and independence is not limited to our land alone. It is also inextricably linked to liberating our people and building a Palestinian society with an indivisible unity, both inside our homeland and in the diaspora. One day, there will no longer be areas designated as Area A, B, and C or any other territorial divisions. Nothing will prevent citizens of the State of Palestine from movement and residence throughout the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Palestine's development is also grounded in the fact that Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Palestine. No political solution is tenable without a just solution to the refugee issue in tandem with the provisions and rules of International Law and relevant UN resolutions, ensuring refugees' right of return and compensation. We will manage our land and resources to enable a new era of growth and prosperity. Preparations for legislative and presidential elections have begun, with

municipal elections planned for later this year. The process is consistent with Palestine's constitutional and international obligations to hold periodic elections, undertake peaceful transition of power, and renew the political system. Democratic voting fosters diverse ideological and political views, which characterize the Palestinian "mosaic". It also provides the checks and balances that ensure the effective engagement of all, through legitimate institutions representing the Palestinian people, namely, the Palestinian National Council and the parliament of the State of Palestine. Our commitment to free and fair elections is deeply rooted in our conviction that any development framework cannot be detached from the political framework in which it operates. A successful development effort rests on participation and grassroots base, allowing broader political representation of society from across the spectrum.

National Policy 3: **One Land; One People**

Our vision of achieving the unity of our land and our people is not an elusive dream. It is the outcome of our people's resilience, attachment to their land, and cohesion with one another. The Palestinian land and the Palestinian people are both unified and united politically, geographically, and institutionally, within the inclusive national framework. Obligations and responsibilities are shared through mutual understanding, dialogue, and joint action. Any development vision of Palestine is doomed to failure if it does not engage Palestinians of the diaspora in the development process, build relationships with Palestinians of the 1948 territory, and instill the sense of allegiance to Palestine as their motherland, to which they are proudly loyal. We

will work for Palestine to become an oasis of freedom, democracy, protection of human rights, and full equality between men and women in all walks of public life.

Therefore, we will work towards realizing our national unity and bring about our vision of a united Palestine by reunifying the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Palestinian government also shoulders its responsibility towards all Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It needs to be empowered to rule both areas in order to continue to be capable of service provision. We will connect both areas by an integrated national transportation system and put an end to the brutal siege on the Gaza Strip. Any successful development plan for Palestine presumes territorial contiguity between the Gaza Strip and West Bank, with a view to consolidating economic activity, as well as the infrastructure and superstructure of economic, social, and political functions. The Rafah Crossing will be open on a permanent basis.

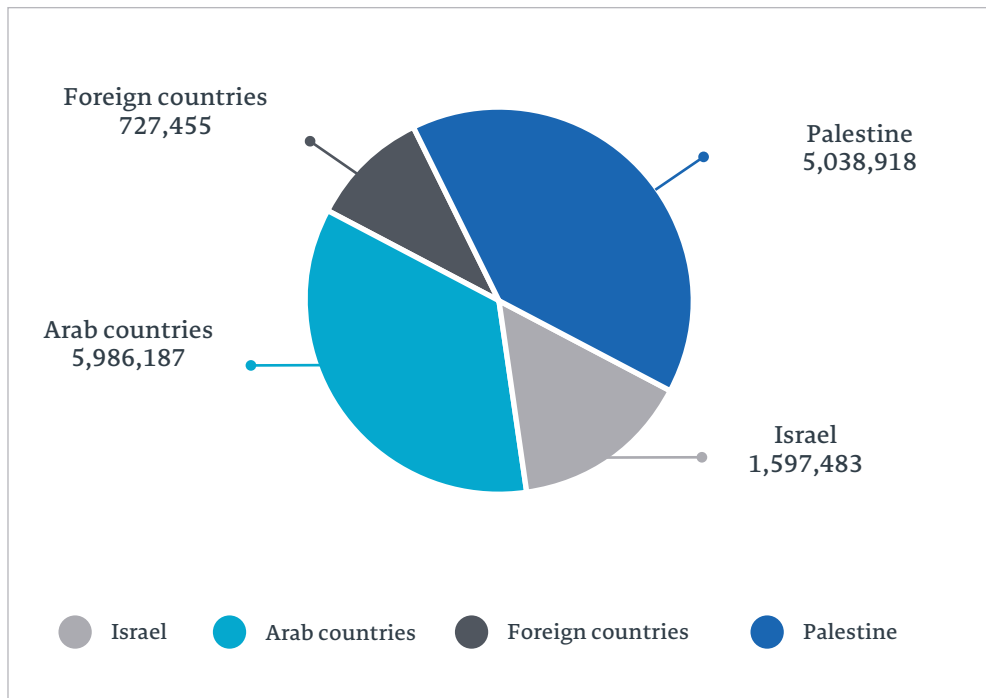
National unity extends far beyond reaching a political and administrative solution. In the future, citizens of the State of Palestine in a unified territory will have access to the same economic opportunities and same quality of life in all areas of the country.

Our national unity will be further promoted and strengthened by our work on enacting a modern body of legislation, including consistent provisions and reflecting our international obligations. This will replace the heavy legacy of regulations bequeathed by the Ottoman, British Mandate, Jordanian, and Egyptian authorities and Israel, whose military orders are grounded in racist colonial policies. In addition, we will continue the process of bringing our legislation in line with international conventions on human rights.

Geography does not provide the basis for a definition of the Palestinian people. As shown in Chart 1 below, 62 percent of Palestinians live beyond the borders of Palestine. Mostly registered by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), 44 percent of these live in Arab host countries, including Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. This requires that the Palestinian government work closely with the governments of host countries and international organizations towards scaling up quality services delivered to Palestinian refugees, until such time their plight comes to an end and the right of return is realized.

The Palestinian government works on developing capabilities that encourage all our people, both inside Palestine and beyond, to engage in our national march towards freedom and independence. The government attracts these Palestinians' contributions to building the independent and sovereign Palestinian State through investment in our national economy, financial aid, recruitment of expertise, or efforts to mobilize international support to end colonialism and gain freedom and independence.

Chart 1: Estimated number of Palestinian population around the world, according to country of residence by the end of 2019



Box 5: National Policy 3

One Land; One People

Through the following policy interventions:

- Reunify the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- Connect the West Bank and Gaza Strip to an integrated national transportation system.
- Consolidate and modernize Palestine's body of law, ensuring consistency with the State of Palestine's international obligations.
- Work with international organizations and host countries to improve the quality of services to Palestinian refugees.
- Strengthen ties between Palestinians, inside and outside Palestine, and expand their contributions to state-building and independence.



National Policy 4:

Upholding Democratic Principles

Our vision involves our commitment to building a Palestinian state, which is guided by the norms of democracy and pluralism. Upgrading our constitutional framework provides a vehicle by which we will seek to align our political system with the requirements of democracy and human rights, ensure equality and citizenship rights, and promote political representation through free and fair elections.

The 1988 Declaration of Independence marked the point of departure for Palestine's constitutional process. Promulgated in 2002 and amended in 2003 and 2005, the Basic Law serves as a temporary constitution of our State. Following the UN General Assembly resolution recognising Palestine as a non-member observer State, there is a dire need to reconsider the constitutional framework that governs the State. The Basic Law needs to be updated or a new constitution of the State adopted, in keeping with the fact that Palestine is a democratic and pluralistic state, upholding human rights standards and international obligations in view of its accession to international human rights treaties and Geneva Conventions, among others.

Until such time a permanent constitution of the State of Palestine is adopted, the rights of and due protection to all Palestinians will be maintained by legislation ensuring human rights and by institutions responsible for safeguarding respect for the constitution in general and human rights in particular. Given that a rights-based society is not only premised on legal structures, citizens must also enjoy these rights in their daily lives. We will, therefore, provide the means to ensure and

uphold citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms - first and foremost, the right to freedom of expression, including freedom of the press. We will consult all parties on necessary measures to make sure that we implement and institutionalize our constitutional obligations, ensuring a favorable impact on citizens' day-to-day lives.

Box 6: National Policy 4

Upholding Democratic Principles

Through the following policy interventions:

- Reconsider the constitutional framework governing the State in consistence with international contractual obligations and customary practice.
- Hold regular democratic elections at all levels across Palestine.
- Promote respect for pluralism, equality and freedom from discrimination, and safeguard citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms.
- Uphold and protect public rights and freedoms.

3. Strengthening Palestine's International Status

A grave threat was posed to the question of Palestine by the so-called Deal of the Century of the former US Administration. The scheme comprised a set of unilateral US measures, including recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in 2017 and suspension of US assistance to Palestinians. Subsequently, on 28 January 2020, Israel officially announced a plan to annex parts of the Palestinian land. Despite this, our commitment to realizing the two-state solution on a peaceful and equitable basis remains firm and unwavering, so long as it is possible. In the meantime, international pressure must be mobilized to ensure that an enabling environment is created to facilitate the launch of meaningful negotiations. The State of Palestine will continue to take needed steps to strengthen and upgrade its status among the world community of nations.

National Policy 5:

Broadening Palestine's International Participation

The State of Palestine continues steadily to gain full international recognition. Today, the Palestinian flag is flying high and proud in front of the UN headquarters. In 2011, Palestine became the 195th member State of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In 2012, the UN General Assembly welcomed Palestine to the UN General Assembly. In 2015, the State of Palestine joined another 123 Member States of the ICC.

Additionally, thanks to acceding to and engaging with international organizations, Palestine ratified 103 international conventions and treaties, including those deriving from the International Law and

International Humanitarian Law. These also included conventions on the fight against corruption, rights of the child, and elimination of discrimination against women. Within its available resources, Palestine has committed to implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Now, the State of Palestine is required to bring its body of law and policy in line with these international treaties and conventions. Palestine has not made any reservations to any of the conventions it has so far ratified. While pursuing membership on international organizations, based on extensive discussion, Palestine will continue to examine available capacities to accede to further international treaties and conventions.

Our next step is to achieve full membership at the UN, continue to ratify multilateral international conventions, and accede to other international organizations.

Box 7: National Policy 5

Broadening Palestine's International Participation

Through the following policy interventions:

- Attain full membership in the United Nations.
- Fulfill obligations arising from Palestine's accession to international treaties and membership in international organizations.
- Actively participate in international forums.
- Gradually seek accession to additional international conventions and organizations.

National Policy 6:

Expanding Palestine's Bilateral Relations

We will not spare any effort to expand our bilateral relations with all the 140 States that have officially recognized the State of Palestine. We will also work tirelessly to broaden the scope of our bilateral relations to include States that have not yet officially recognized our State, ultimately attaining full diplomatic recognition of the State of Palestine.

Palestine also has strategic relations with its Arab community. It will seek to strengthen these ties to the benefit of all parties. Besides the fact that it reflects a strategic approach, Arab countries are the natural partners for this NDP 2021-2023, which strives for disengagement from the occupation and an end to economic dependence on the colonial State of Israel.

Box 8: National Policy 6

Expanding Palestine's Bilateral Relations

Through the following policy interventions:

- Expand bilateral recognition of the State of Palestine.
- Deepen bilateral relations of the State of Palestine, particularly with Arab states.

Pillar 2: Improving public service provision

Implemented over the past decade, the National Institution Building Plan has resulted in creating and reinforcing the preparedness of the Palestinian state institutions for effective and efficient functions. In this context, this NDP 2021-2023 marks a new phase of administrative and institutional reform across Palestine. The Plan is designed to reshape the way the government deals with citizens, with a view to promoting their participation and engagement in the decisions affecting their lives and in public service delivery mechanisms.

Within this framework, Pillar 2 of the NDP 2021-2023, Excellent Public Service Provision, includes the following national priorities and policies:

Pillar 2: Excellent Public Service Provision	
Priorities	National Policies
4. Citizen-Centered Government	7. Responsive Local Government 8. Improving Services to Citizens 9. Reforming and Developing Land Administration
5. Effective Government	10. Strengthening Integrity, Accountability, Transparency and Fight against Corruption 11. Strengthening the Efficiency of Public Institutions 12. Effective, Efficient Management of Available Resources

4. Citizen-Centered Government

The Citizen-Centered Government is concerned with building public institutions, whose composition and implementation of public policies is centered on citizens. These institutions place their focus on the delivery of the best services to citizens. To this end, we will work over the next three years towards implementing three major reform processes: (1) Restructuring LGUs to allow greater opportunity to citizens to express the way and the mechanism by which their lives are managed; (2) Launching a key initiative to enhance the quality of services we provide to our people, including the creation of an effective system to manage water and electricity facilities in consistence with relevant laws; and (3) Reforming and developing land administration.

National Policy 7: **Responsive Local Government**

Having built national public institutions, the next step is to make optimal local government arrangements and structures. The government will work towards designing and implementing an integrated programme to reform the local government sector in the medium to the long terms, ensuring response to citizens' needs and priorities. This national programme will impact all communities and, by consequence, every citizen.

Although relevant regulations provide for a greater and more comprehensive role, the majority of LGUs currently provide a limited number of services. LGUs are due to start to provide a much broader scope of services, as far as their capacities and financial resources permit.

To expand and improve the quality of municipal public service delivery, local government powers need to be extended, allowing the collection of revenues and management of resources. Also, an effective financial remittance system between the central government and LGUs will be created. An efficient system for water and electricity service facility management will be established in line with relevant laws.

Finally, more focus will be placed on stimulating and invigorating local economic development, particularly in areas marginalized and threatened by the occupation. Increasing municipal revenues is supposed to be boosted by higher economic growth, not just tax revenues.

Box 9: National Policy 7

Responsive Local Government

Through the following policy interventions:

- Reform and restructure local government and administration.
- Decentralize services to LGUs, where requisite capabilities are available.
- Expand municipal taxation, revenue-raising and resource management mandates.
- Develop an effective system of intergovernmental tax transfers.
- Develop local economy, particularly in areas marginalized and threatened by the occupation.
- Put in place an efficient system for water and electricity service facility management consistent with relevant laws.

National Policy 8: Improving Services to Citizens

The government is going ahead with the process of improving public service provision. Accordingly, the government also seeks to roll out an institutional culture, grounded in enhanced services. Citizens' needs will form the basis of planning and implementation across public institutions. The government will embrace an approach to full partnership between the public sector, private sector, and non-governmental organizations (NGO). This will ensure that services are

accessed by and delivered to citizens in an integrated, cost efficient, and labor saving manner. It will also allow recipients to take part in determining how services are provided to them.

Against this backdrop, the government is launching the Palestine Government Excellence Programme, based on global standards of public administration. Among the outputs of this programme is the establishment of the Palestine Government Excellence Center, which will be tasked to provide a permanent platform to enhance government performance and service quality, according to relevant international standards. It will provide direct technical support to governmental departments, using successful experiences and best local and global practices.

This national policy, Improving Services to Citizens, will provide a cornerstone of the government SRF, which sets service quality and access standards in the plans and budgets prepared by relevant public institutions, provides rigorous follow up, and disseminates these standards to citizens. This will be supported by a government complaints system, which will receive and handle public feedback.

To facilitate citizens' access to public services, the government will work towards implementing a number of initiatives, including expansion of government online services through the E-Government Programme. The number of public service delivery hubs will be increased. The framework places a special emphasis on expanding and improving the scope of government service delivery in disadvantaged areas, particularly throughout areas marginalized and threatened by the occupation. Innovative initiatives will be launched to ensure that

citizens in remote and marginalized areas can access public services. We are also committed to providing high quality gender-sensitive services, with the aim of achieving social justice and protecting children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

In Palestine, public service provision is not restricted to the government. Rather, within a framework of complementarity, nongovernmental partners have always had a pivotal role to play in this context, including NGOs, private sector, and international organizations. However, complementary action will be premised on a democratically agreed national agenda to bring about sustainable development and social justice. It will ensure that poor and disadvantaged communities across the Palestinian land have access to services.

Over the upcoming three years, we look forward to bolstering partnership with all nongovernmental partners in order to promote and improve the services we jointly provide to citizens in all their communities. Accordingly, as explained below, the cycle of key development actors is complete. This will be built on a strategic partnership between the Palestinian government and NGO sector, including civil society, universities, private sector, and donors. Therefore, investment, development, and support will be necessarily linked to the ability of these institutions to serve this unified and agreed strategic approach. Particular importance is further attached to performance assessment in order to see the extent to which clusters have successfully created employment opportunities, attracted investments, facilitated cluster exports, and made achievements as planned. Interaction between the private sector, universities, and government will also be measured. Hence, the donor community should be bound by the priorities set

by clusters. International assistance will contribute to advancing the development process, rather than consolidating the current economic dependence. It is also important to make sure that this development plan will not generate debt accumulation, increase private sector arrears owed by the Ministry of Finance (MoF), and build up annual deficit.



Box 10: National Policy 8

Improving Services to Citizens

Through the following policy interventions:

- Develop and implement a government-wide service improvement strategy in cooperation with partners, with particular focus on areas marginalized and threatened by the occupation.
- Launch the Palestine Government Excellence Programme.
- Develop and implement an e-government strategy, focusing on the delivery of on-line services to citizens.
- Strengthen integrated service delivery in partnership with the private sector and civil society.

National Policy 9:

Reforming and Developing Land Administration

In view of its importance, the comprehensive reform of land administration and governance is among the public services in focus. Covering all parts of the State of Palestine, completion of land registration and title registry, establishment of a network of land registration offices, and development of a national spatial information management system will protect citizens' property rights, promote investment, expand real estate lending, and contribute to resolving social and family disputes over inheritance and property rights.

To this end, the government has launched an initiative to complete land registration and protect Palestinian personal and collective rights

to land throughout the land of the State of Palestine. This initiative paves the way to preparing and implementing a comprehensive policy on land administration and management, including effective state land management and use.

The government pays attention to land administration in particular, and agriculture sector in general, including by expanding the area under cultivation through a government-funded land reclamation programme and directing cooperative action to assist farmers. This should promote Palestinian citizens' resilience on their land, provide economic and legal empowerment, and maintain the rights of title holders by upgrading land registration and undertaking needed surveys. The government is also attentive to a better utilization of Waqf land, ultimately serving government development plans.



5. Effective Government

Over the past decade, the government concentrated on building an integrated set of state institutions. With the NDP 2021-2023, focus will shift to ensuring that the government not only carries out assigned functions and business, but also implements them effectively and efficiently.

In spite of the progress made by Palestine in effective government, there is still room for more improvement. In the medium term, the government will work for more effective government by promoting the level of accountability and transparency and implementing effective and efficient public financial management processes.

National Policy 10:

Strengthening Integrity, Accountability, Transparency and the Fight against Corruption

Accountability implies that the executive branch of government is subject to oversight by the legislative and judicial powers. Public officials will be answerable to citizens for their functions, including in terms of policy implementation and service provision that respond to the needs of society at large. Transparency means total clarity in decision-making, government action, planning, and policy-making processes. It also involves facilitating public access to information, with that access only denied in cases relating to national security.

As it is unfeasible to anticipate or know all processes undertaken by or the demands made on public officials, these personnel will necessarily carry out their duties within an ethical framework at all times.

In reality, a transparent and open government is essentially grounded

in empowering citizens to access information under the law. The government will work towards developing an effective law, ensuring the right to access to information.

External and internal oversight serves as a defensive shield against corrupt practices and waste of public funds. Accordingly, work should be continued to support the critical role played by the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau in uncovering misuse of public finances and inefficient public expenditure. In addition to strengthening their powers, capacity building needs to be provided to internal oversight units at government bodies and line ministries.



Box 12: National Policy 10

Strengthening Integrity, Accountability, Transparency and the Fight against Corruption

Through the following policy interventions:

- Strengthen transparency and accountability in government.
- Ensure the right of access to information.
- Strengthen the role of financial and administrative audit institutions.

National Policy 11:

Strengthening the Efficiency of Public Institutions

The government will implement a results-based management system throughout line ministries, non-ministerial government bodies, and agencies. This approach will provide citizens and stakeholders with a broad range of information on government performance. In this context, the government will design and implement evidence- and SRF-based national policy making processes.

The government continues to articulate its commitment to an integrated planning and budgeting approach as a key component of results-based management. The government has consistently ensured this commitment throughout the national planning process since 2008. The NDP 2021-2023 is an extension of previous efforts, where sector and crosscutting strategies and medium-term budgets of line ministries

and government bodies are developed on the basis of the same financial assumptions and envelopes. We will keep up the efforts to integrate planning and budgeting processes through annual updates to the NDP 2021-2023.

The government will also resume the review of functions and tasks of independent national institutions. In addition to eliminating unneeded ones, institutions with similar and overlapping functions will be merged. The terms of reference of these institutions will be reviewed, ensuring they are not separated from relevant line ministries.

We are convinced that performance cannot only be enhanced by better planning, budgeting, and performance management. Equally important, quality results depend on the level of professionalism and capacities of the civil service sector, which will be supported by effective and efficient processes tailored to manage and develop human resources. Application of a professional code of conduct and ethics in the Palestinian civil service sector can lay the institutional basis by which government functions are guided by ethical standards.

We can only optimize capacities of the civil service sector in Palestine when we furnish every possible opportunity to empower women to unleash their potential and capabilities. To achieve this target, we must remove obstacles to women's employment, promotion, and retention. In particular, women must have guaranteed access to senior and key decision-making positions. Although the general representation of women in the Palestinian civil service sector is promising (45 percent), the number of senior positions held by women (currently standing at 12 percent) needs to be increased.

Remarkably, according to 2019 statistics, participation of women in the labor market accounted for only 20 percent. Also curiously, the higher the academic qualification, the harder it is for capable women to find employment opportunities. This is in contrast to the global employment pattern. The reason might be attributed to a stereotyped thinking of society, which limits senior positions to men, excluding women from the competition over these posts, particularly in the private sector and middle management of the public sector.

Therefore, it is essential that the needs of youth and women are taken into account, so that they can find evidence that the government and government programmes support and empower them to launch their enterprises and integrate into the labor market. Importantly, the bases of employment and promotion in the state should be seriously reviewed so that they are merit-based and transparent. These will contribute to bridging the gap in women's representation in the labor market and government sector, especially in senior positions. In terms of the impact on women, girls, and youth, we will make sure to review government policies and see the extent to which these policies contribute to promoting and implementing the Gender Mainstreaming and Youth Empowerment Strategy. We will provide necessary tools to ensure that the principles of gender equality are mainstreamed and streamlined into public policies, draft laws, and relevant planning and budgeting processes. In addition, we will empower the youth and give them the opportunity to carry out their entrepreneurial programmes and ideas.



Box 13: National Policy 11

Strengthening the Efficiency of Public Institutions

Through the following policy interventions:

- Institutionalize commitment to the code of conduct for civil servants.
- Reform and restructure public institutions for more efficient service provision.
- Develop and provide effective management of human resources in the civil service sector.
- Strengthen results- and performance-based management, finalize planning and budgeting integration, and shift to programme-based budget.
- Institutionalize gender mainstreaming and crosscutting issues in government policy-making, planning and budgeting.

National Policy 12:

Effective, Efficient Management of Available Resources

The NDP 2021-2023 lays out the profound financial challenges facing Palestine as a result of settler colonialism and the sharp curtailment in foreign aid. In the medium term, difficult choices need to be made to bring Palestine back on the track of fiscal sustainability. To achieve this goal, the government must scale up the level and quality of public financial management, with a focus on macroeconomic management,

fiscal policy, public debt management, and procurement. In general, the civil service sector needs to have the capacities needed to provide decision-makers with evidence-based policies and options, taking account of potential financial impacts. This way, the government will be able to make informed policy decisions to regularize financial shortfalls, improve collection mechanisms, control expenditures, and reduce arrears.

The public pension system continues to be stifled by financial challenges. To bring it back to a sustainable track, the government will take measures to ensure regular contributions, downsize arrears, and introduce necessary changes to system formalities.

Our public institutions have been built to be capable of carrying out all government functions. We have already taken important strides in achieving this goal. Now, our next step is to restructure our public institutions to shift from a focus on managerial responsibilities to a more effective and efficient provision of services to citizens.

LGUs are increasingly dependent on revenues generated from power distribution, water supply, wastewater management, and other public services. As a result, a net lending problem arises in cases where LGUs fail to repay due amounts on time: Israel deducts the amount of overdue bills and associated fines from tax revenue transfers to Palestine. To address this problem and enhance municipal service delivery to Palestinian communities, the government will restructure and better organize public services, prioritizing the electricity and water sectors. This measure will complement government measures to reform the local government sector and intergovernmental financial processes.

The Palestinian government has approved the establishment of a governmental bank, namely, the Al-Istiqlal Bank for Development and Investment. Among other things, this bank will be tasked to provide loans and financing services to the families of martyrs and political prisoners, as well as to released prisoners. It will process salary transfers and issue ATM cards to provide financial services to beneficiaries. This measure is driven by recurrent Israeli threats to impose financial penalties on banks operating in Palestine if they continue to carry out financial transactions to the benefit of Palestinian prisoners and their families.



Box 14: National Policy 12

Effective, Efficient Management of Available Resources

Through the following policy interventions:

- Ensure fiscal sustainability and improve public financial management, with a particular focus on strengthening macroeconomic/ fiscal policy, public debt management, and rationalization of expenditures.
- Strengthen the public procurement system, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- Mobilize revenue by expanding the tax base, enhancing tax collection, and restoring foreign aid levels.
- Reform the public sector pension system.
- Establish Palestine's utilities, prioritizing the electricity and water sectors.
- Improve, rationalize, and rehabilitate public utility management.



Pillar 3: Sustainable Development

Pillar 3 of the NDP 2021-2023 encompasses the majority of the State of Palestine's reform agenda. This pillar will be implemented through five national priorities and 21 national policies.

Pillar 3: Sustainable Development	
Priorities	National Policies
6. Economic Disengagement from the Occupation and Cluster Development	13. Building Palestine's Future Economy based on Cluster Development 14. Creating Decent Job Opportunities for All 15. Improving Palestine's Business Environment 16. Promoting Palestinian Industry
7. Social Justice and Rule of Law	17. Escaping Multidimensional Poverty 18. Strengthening Social Protection 19. Improving Access to Justice 20. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 21. Youth Empowerment
8. Inclusive, Quality Education for All	22. Improving Early Childhood and Pre-School Education 23. Improving Student Enrollment and Retention 24. Promoting Good Upbringing of Children 25. Improving Primary and Secondary Education 26. Enhancing Transition from Education to Employment
9. Inclusive Health Care Coverage for All	27. Providing Quality Health Care Services for All 28. Improving Citizens' Health and Well-Being
10. Resilient Communities	29. Ensuring Community Security, Public Safety, and the Rule of Law 30. Meeting the Basic Needs of Our Communities 31. Ensuring a Sustainable Environment 32. Revitalizing Agriculture and Strengthening Our Rural Communities 33. Preserving Our National Identity and Cultural Heritage Based on the Palestinian Narrative

Sustainable development is closely linked to political and economic independence. It is difficult, if not impossible, for long-term economic sustainability to be achieved under ongoing Israeli control over and exploitation of our land and natural resources. Israel also continues to place conditions on licences for business development, imports of products, and needed infrastructure enhancement, particularly in areas marginalized and threatened by the occupation. These actions hamper our efforts to make progress.

Likewise, sustainable development should take into account the impact of social disintegration due to Israeli policies and measures. Our youth are worried about their future and are assailed with doubts about the possibility of pursuing their aspirations of living in a free homeland. As long as our land is colonized, sustainable solutions cannot be devised for the development challenges ahead of us.

Nevertheless, we must move forward to develop our society. This is why we have designed our sector strategies to enhance service provision and quality to improve citizens' lives and support their resilience. In this context, while Pillars 1 and 2 of the NDP 2021-2023 have their focus on reforms initiated by the government at a national level and across line ministries, non-ministerial government bodies, and agencies, Pillar 3 contains the majority of policy interventions, which we will carry out in every sector to achieve sustainable development by means of a cluster development model. This approach is used because, as Palestine continues to wage a struggle for independence and liberation, known development theories are inadequate. Israel's policy further aims at keeping development within a narrow margin, in which the occupation continues and the Palestinian government does not break apart.

Against this backdrop, it is an imperative to adopt a national economic and political approach, aimed at liberation and building of the independent sovereign state on the 1967 borders and along the lines of the comprehensive national strategy.

Cluster development is one model that deserves particular attention and application. In addition to strengthening local products, cluster development serves national goals of preserving and preventing confiscation or settlement of our land. It creates employment opportunities and gives a comparative advantage to every Palestinian governorate. Interaction between these clusters lays the groundwork for achieving success in gradual disengagement from the Israeli economy and moving forward to national liberation and independence.

The occupation and its settler colonial policies make any development endeavor a nearly impossible task. Since its establishment within the framework of the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian government's experience has proven that sustainable development is difficult to achieve under the occupation. Therefore, the NDP 2021-2023 is driven by the need to restructure the Palestinian economy, change the tools and driving forces of development, and transform its pattern based on the lessons learned from our reality, namely, a protracted occupation and increasingly dangerous settler colonialism.

Until such time the occupation comes to an end militarily and politically, progressive disengagement from dependence on Israel must be maintained by promoting national products both quantitatively and qualitatively. We must strengthen the production base of the economy, incentivize production and trade, and staunch the financial haemorrhage resulting from tax and fiscal leakage to the Israeli treasury.

If disengagement from the occupation is the first headline of the economic programme, the second is to work towards modifying the Palestinian economic model. This is based on bringing about a shift in education outcomes, process of community property, nature of functions, and employment opportunities.

6. Economic Disengagement from the Occupation and Cluster Development

In light of the ongoing colonization of Palestine, our economic policies should strike a balance between immediate creation of employment opportunities as an urgent need and laying the foundations for an independent and competitive national economy in the post-occupation stage. These two objectives are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Launching a nation-wide campaign to promote national products will create employment opportunities and increase the share of national products of domestic consumption. At the same time, it will build the necessary base for future export-oriented industries with our fellow Arab countries.

Removing the obstacles posed by cumbersome procedures and providing support to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) will contribute to supporting the private sector both at present and in the future. This includes initiatives needed to strengthen Palestine's direct relations with other countries, particularly in direct imports, without undermining local products. Emphasis will be placed on our Arab relations, promoting trade and economic ties with the Arab region. We will benefit from the narrow margin allowed with effective economic agreements, which have not so far been adequately put to

use, for example, importing commodities (e.g. petroleum) from our fellow Arab countries.

To ensure a common and fair future for all our people, we must work towards bridging the development gap between the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This necessitates that we rebuild and develop the industrial base in the Gaza Strip by building an active Palestinian national economy with integrated components in the future.

National Policy 13:

Building Palestine's Future Economy based on Cluster Development

Cluster development can strike the required balance to initiate comprehensive development throughout areas and segments of the Palestinian people. Rather than being vertically limited to a single area, cluster development places a focus on horizontal expansion to cover various Palestinian geographies. Interconnections are premised on the focus of each cluster, as well as on collaboration and integration with other sectors. Territorial development enables us to focus on some areas to help capitalize on available opportunities, such as the Jordan Valley and the Gaza coast. Territorial development also has the potential to provide needed coverage to deal differently with the city of Jerusalem, promoting its role as the capital of the State of Palestine. This model also contributes to bridging gaps between various Palestinian areas. It opens up rural areas, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem to new and targeted investments, including in agriculture, industry, and tourism sectors, and provides financial facilities and concessionary loans to these regions. Therefore, the financial sector and donor

community have an important role in supporting inclusive economic development and infrastructure needed to create an enabling economic environment.



Box 15: National Policy 13

Building Palestine's Future Economy based on Cluster Development

Through the following policy interventions:

- Rebuild and develop Palestine's productive sectors, focusing on manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism clusters.
- Attract domestic and foreign direct investment, focusing on construction, tourism, agriculture, energy, and ICT sectors.
- Develop exports and expand international trade, particularly with the Arab region.
- Design and implement in economy-vital infrastructure project (particularly airport, seaport, industrial parks, transportation, telecom, and water and electricity networks).
- Strengthen the financial sector's role in supporting comprehensive economic development.
- Bridge the West Bank-Gaza development gap.

National Policy 14:

Creating Decent Job Opportunities for All

In addition to promoting regionally balanced development and fostering economic openness to Arab countries, the strength and dynamics of a development model is measured by its ability to stimulate the economy and create employment opportunities. Cluster

development will promote citizens' resilience on their land and reduce potential brain drain. This does not mean that we are close-minded or have reservations about opening the labor market. Investment in human resources also requires that investments be channelled to employment-generating sectors and that domestic basic needs be met. Hence, public-private partnership is necessary to create an economic turn. This is in spite of the Palestinian economy distortions created by the occupation and Israeli colonial policies, which have made the Palestinian market dependent on Israel. While relying more on manpower than on skilled and specialized employment, the Palestinian economy has been more service- than production-based.

Box 16: National Policy 14

Creating Decent Job Opportunities for All

Through the following policy interventions:

- Expedite job creation through public-private investment partnerships.
- Accelerate empowerment of male and female graduates to initiate their own private and entrepreneurial businesses.
- Enforce relevant laws to ensure a safe work environment that observes health and occupational safety standards.

National Policy 15: **Improving Palestine's Business Environment**

The new development model takes the domestic economic context seriously. Accordingly, focus will be placed on promoting MSMEs and family enterprises, which account for the largest portion of businesses in Palestine. The government also pays attention to regulating and governing informal markets and cooperatives. A legislative and legal enabling environment must be created in support of investment and businesses, contributing to the comprehensive economic development process.

Additionally, the NDP 2021-2023 attaches particular importance to ICT and internet in development and digital economy advancement exercises. Accordingly, an international campaign is needed to help us overcome Israeli impediments to using the successive generations of ICT. This also requires that we fight online piracy and promote cyber security.



Box 17: National Policy 15

Improving Palestine's Business Environment

Through the following policy interventions:

- Support business start-ups and MSMEs.
- Support and promote the digital economy and content.
- Promote good governance in, support, expand and develop cooperatives.
- Create an enabling legislative environment and administrative processes in support of the business sector and comprehensive economic development.
- Enhance ICT's role as a business and comprehensive economic development enabler.
- Strengthen Palestine's cyber security and ensure the ICT sector's freedom from external threats and domination.



National Policy 16:

Promoting Palestinian Industry

Economic disengagement requires promoting national industry, as well as supporting and enhancing the competitiveness of national products. Palestinian products can, therefore, be rightly placed in the domestic market. Focusing on productive sectors, mainly agriculture and industry, and the development of public goods and services can improve our national economy. Disengagement from the occupation cannot be achieved without providing internationally competitive national alternatives to Israeli products. This requires that productive, rather than just service, sectors be built in some areas.

Box 18: National Policy 16

Promoting Palestinian Industry

Through the following policy interventions:

- Support, protect, and increase competitiveness of national products.
- Increase Palestinian products' share of the local market.
- Rebuild productive sectors, particularly in the Gaza Strip.
- Develop and implement industrial clusters towards self-reliance and disengagement from the occupation.

7. Social Justice and Rule of Law

In the State of Palestine, social justice and rule of law must be viewed from the perspective of a nation that has been deprived of the most basic social justice. Despite the fact that the State of Palestine continues to be under occupation, it is required to fulfill its obligations towards its citizens. It needs to secure fundamental freedoms, ensure human rights, justice, and equality, provide opportunities, and protect vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Since 2011, the State of Palestine has acceded to more than 100 international conventions and treaties, many of which provide for respecting human rights and set obligations and responsibilities on States Parties. On its part, the government of the State of Palestine acknowledges its responsibilities towards, and implements the letter and spirit of, these conventions and treaties. In spite of the ongoing Israeli colonization of our land, we are committed to finding the means and strategies that will enable us to eradicate poverty, ensure equal access to basic services, and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls. We are attentive of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in all national and sector policies. We make sure that our youth look to the future, not out of despair and frustration, but with an eye of hope for a free, decent, and productive life.



National Policy 17: **Escaping Multidimensional Poverty**

In spite of various development plans, poverty and unemployment rates continue to soar. In addition to the occupation and its practices, among the reasons given is that poverty and unemployment programmes were not linked to the development of the national economy and productive sectors, which would have created employment opportunities and reduced poverty.

It is, therefore, critical to develop economic empowerment programmes, targeting the poor and vulnerable groups. Social and economic policies will take into consideration the needs of these groups, secure a decent life for them, and contribute to their social and economic integration.



Box 19: National Policy 17

Escaping Multidimensional Poverty

Through the following policy interventions:

- Ensure minimum income for the poor through social assistance.
- Strengthen economic and social empowerment programmes benefiting vulnerable groups and the poor.
- Ensure that economic and social policies meet the needs of vulnerable groups and the poor.
- Promote social integration by establishing job creation programmes for excluded groups (disabled, youth, women, ex-prisoners).
- Provide basic services, ensuring a decent life for poor households.

National Policy 18:

Strengthening Social Protection

Intended development also rests on a solid basis of high quality, gender-sensitive social services, which aim at achieving social justice and providing protection to children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Hence, the importance of enforcing a fair social security law, in particular, and developing social responsibility, in general. It is also essential to broaden social dialogue on issues of common interest.

Box 20: National Policy 18

Strengthening Social Protection

Through the following policy interventions:

- Develop adequate and progressive social protection systems and frameworks, prioritizing persons with disabilities and the elderly.
- Ensure effective implementation of the social security law and regulations.
- Promote and institutionalize corporate social responsibility.
- Promote and institutionalize tripartite social dialogue.

National Policy 19: Improving Access to Justice

Palestine is committed to respecting human rights and freedoms, so it focuses on building institutions, ensuring an effective and credible judicial system, and fulfilling its obligations under relevant international conventions. Development is, thus, premised on strengthened law enforcement and guaranteed rights of all with discrimination. Vulnerable persons will be able to seek redress in the law, which serves and is enforced for all people. Law is independent and safeguards justice.

Box 21: National Policy 19

Improving Access to Justice

Through the following policy interventions:

- Strengthen and implement human rights legislation.
- Ensure a fair, transparent, efficient, and independent judicial system.
- Ensure effective implementation of court decisions.
- Ensure integrated delivery of and fair access to judicial services, particularly for women and children.
- Strengthen the institutional capacity and organization of the justice sector.

National Policy 20:

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Both internationally and constitutionally, Palestine has articulated its commitment to banning all forms of discrimination against women and combating all forms of gender-based violence. Palestine also aspires to remove all obstacles to the full participation of women in community and economic development, as well as in public life.



Box 22: National Policy 20

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Through the following policy interventions:

- Eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls.
- Remove all barriers that prevent the full participation of women in community and economic development and public life.

National Policy 21: Youth Empowerment

In spite of the limited labor market, the government is a key employer in Palestine. However, the government's contribution extends employment to supporting entrepreneurial activities launched by both male and female youths with boundless innovation. As the youth constitute the broader cross-section of society, they need to be encouraged to assume their leading role and engage in voluntary action with a view to strengthening their bond to the homeland and institutions. In this context, the government announced 2020 as the Year of the Youth and took many initiatives to implement relevant policy interventions.



Box 23: National Policy 21

Youth Empowerment

Through the following policy interventions:

- Empower and equip Palestine's youth to participate meaningfully in public life and decision-making.
- Ensure that our youth are provided with opportunities for a successful future.
- Support youth's entrepreneurial initiatives.

8. Inclusive, Quality Education for All

The priority Inclusive, Quality Education for All, derives from the government's longstanding commitment to ensuring high quality education. Since 2000, the State of Palestine has attained achievements that cannot be overlooked, expanding the scope of enrollment at education institutions among Palestinians. Thanks to these endeavors, the literary rate increased from 89 percent to 97 percent. In addition to increasing enrollment in basic education for both sexes, the number of kindergartens doubled, and enrolled children were on the rise. The number of students per classroom was 26.4 in the West Bank and 39.9 in the Gaza Strip.

Post-secondary education continues to show sustained improvement, particularly among females. Women with a secondary level of schooling or higher rose from 8 percent in 2000 to 18.4 percent in 2015. Looking

to the future and working towards providing quality education for all, the government will maintain and improve current enrollment rates in education for both sexes, especially in secondary education of all streams. While striking a balance between these streams, the government will focus on the shift to high quality and specialization in education.

In this context, action should be taken to upgrade education curricula, incorporate digitization, and enhance education standards, including of digital education. Early childhood education is a new sphere, which allows us to build up a solid foundation for learning and creativity. TVET centers and higher education institutions must also be connected to and aligned with the labor market needs. Work will continue to rehabilitate and train teachers. Capacity building and development will also be provided in the field of scientific research.

In reality, the government does not bear the exclusive responsibility for quality education. More than 30 percent of Palestinian teachers and some 500,000 students work and learn at UNRWA schools or private schools. Accordingly, the Education Sector Strategy must be informed by a participatory process, ensuring consistency, complementarity, and distinction between all educational institutions.

The government aims at providing youth-targeted enterprises in agriculture, handicraft industry, and electronic programmes and applications. In part, education will shift to TVET. Combined, these can bring about a set of objectives. Firstly, abstract education, including philosophy, humanities, and social sciences, will be improved but made more focused and less popular, with a view to promoting quality

education in these disciplines. This will reduce pressure on the labor market and furnish opportunities to competent professionals. Secondly, the number of self-employed persons and workers at different enterprises will be increased. Thirdly, a change in the ownership pattern of workplaces and income sources will foster the empowerment and freedom of individuals, remotely from adherence to civil service, foreign donors, or Israeli economy.

National Policy 22:

Improving Early Childhood and Pre-School Education

Palestine is in need of a common kindergarten system. While the scope of pre-school education will be expanded, early care will be provided to all, particularly disadvantaged, children. To this avail, a KG2 class will be added to some governmental schools in marginalized areas.

Box 24: National Policy 22

Improving Early Childhood and Pre-School Education

Through the following policy interventions:

- Develop early childhood education programmes for all.
- Expand and improve pre-school education, particularly for disadvantaged groups.
- Develop and upgrade pre-school education (kindergartens) on the basis of approved international and national standards.

National Policy 23:**Improving Student Enrollment and Retention**

Government education policies are essentially tailored to make the school environment more secure, supportive, and engaging, in order to unleash the potential of future generations. This is accomplished, first and foremost, by improving school facilities and upgrading school buildings, including in Jerusalem. Education curricula and teaching methods will also be reviewed to be more engaging and responsive to individual differences, relying largely on student participation in the educational process. This requires that access to education be more equitable, whereby no one is deprived of education, particularly in and among marginalized areas and groups.



Box 25: National Policy 23

Improving Student Enrollment and Retention

Through the following policy interventions:

- Develop school facilities, including all components, in line with approved standards, and place a special focus on improving and upgrading school buildings and facilities in Jerusalem.
- Adopt teaching methods and techniques that are more integrative and responsive to individual differences.
- Make the school environment more supportive and engaging and provide appropriate psychosocial support to students.
- Ensure equitable access to education, particularly in and among marginalized areas and groups.
- Encourage enrollment in informal education and lifelong learning programmes among the youth and elderly.



National Policy 24:

Promoting Good Upbringing of Children

The educational process extends beyond the narrow perspective of classroom education. Hence, the NDP 2021-2023 takes a special account of students' health in its wider sense and promotes their effective participation in the school and community life and learning life skills needed to shape their personality. This also covers a focus on moral and human values and the nurturing of a sense of affiliation to and awareness of the Palestinian narrative.

Box 26: National Policy 24

Promoting Good Upbringing of Children

Through the following policy interventions:

- Nurture a sense of affiliation to and awareness of the Palestinian narrative.
- Focus on social, cultural, value, moral, and human dimensions commensurate with age groups.
- Pay attention to students' holistic healthcare and to sports, artistic, and cultural activities of various types.
- Promote effective engagement of students in school and community life.
- Ensure adequate focus on life skills and shape students' personality.

National Policy 25: **Improving Primary and Secondary Education**

Critically, the education curriculum needs to be subject to a serious review. This is indispensable to educational adaptation to scientific and technological breakthroughs. It is also necessary to achieve a gender balance in the curriculum. The review of education helps us focus on quality education based on thinking and innovation, rather than on memorization and indoctrination. Multilevel education will be premised on mutual learning and incorporate attention to health, financing, and economy activities and issues, keeping away from one-sided transfer of knowledge.

The role of education also involves national education, upbringing, and mobilization based on national ethics and moderate religious concepts, far from extremism and grounded in justice, equality, respect of the other, and collective responsibility. It is premised on ending the occupation, resilience on land, and promotion of national products.

It is particularly important to develop education facilities, scale up the status of teachers, enhance their living conditions, and improve their teaching capabilities.



Box 27: National Policy 25

Improving Primary and Secondary Education

Through the following policy interventions:

- Develop curricula on a continuing basis, protect Palestinian curricula, and counter the Israelization policy.
- Enhance the status of school teachers and principals, including teaching staff in Jerusalem.
- Develop the educational evaluation system and principles, rationalize secondary education to be more integrative of both sexes, more flexible, more enabling of TVET enrollment, and more aligned to current and future labor market needs.
- Develop science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education.
- Improve higher order thinking skills, including and critical thinking, exploration, research, and analysis, and promote the culture of entrepreneurship and innovation.
- Use technology to individualize and improve education and to shift from teaching to learning.
- Develop education human resources, particularly teachers, to be more capable of play their vital role in teaching and upbringing children.
- Develop informal education and lifelong learning programmes for the youth and elderly.

National Policy 26: **Enhancing Transition from Education to Employment**

It is essential to link education to work, opportunities furnished by the labor market, and contribution to development. Education is supposed to serve as a way out of poverty or achieve an acceptable economic status, requiring an undertaking to improve, rather than limit, access to jobs.

In the NDP 2021-2023, the government also attaches special importance to TVET and handicraft industry so that they are directly aligned with the labor market needs. The government also promotes light industries associated with tourism and agriculture and will develop a database of professionals. This way, education not only contributes to improving the status of individuals themselves, who will find proper employment opportunities. It also provides basic needs to ensure a successful cluster development plan, which works towards promoting national industries and contributes to an integrated exercise that prepares future graduates as well as to the development process at a later stage. Against this background, in 2020, the Council of Ministers made decisions on establishing the Technical University and National Commission on Technical and Vocational Education and Training.



Box 28: National Policy 26

Enhancing Transition from Education to Employment

Through the following policy interventions:

- Align TVET and higher education outputs with development and labor market needs and ensure access to equitable opportunities for all.
- Upgrade and expand the TVET system.
- Develop and expand the base of TVET in consistence with the government cluster development approach.
- Strengthen Palestine's science and research capacity.

9. Inclusive Health Care Coverage for All

Since 2000, the health sector in the State of Palestine has seen substantial improvement. In 2019, the number of hospitals in operation in Palestine rose from 65 to 85 and primary healthcare centres from 595 to 749. During this period, while the number of doctors doubled, nursing and midwifery institutes more than tripled. The infant mortality rate dropped from 27.8 to 11.1 per 1,000 live births in 2009. In the same year, in the context of the expanded national immunization programme, 100 percent of Palestinian children (12-23 months old) received all vaccinations. By contrast, in 2000, 66 percent and 46 percent of children were immunized in urban and rural areas, respectively.

Although health indicators in Palestine are among the best in the Eastern Mediterranean region, there is a pressing need to maintain these

indicators, introduce improvements, and reform deficiencies where required. This is an extremely hard and complicated task, particularly in the context of the ongoing Israeli occupation, the greatest obstacle to progress and prosperity in Palestine.

As is the case of education, healthcare is a joint exercise, involving the government, NGOs, private sector, and UNRWA. Looking towards the future, the scope of focus needs to be extended to high quality, accessible, upgraded, and affordable healthcare services and management. In addition, the public health insurance system will be reviewed. Preventive healthcare, chronic disease management, family health, and mental health services will also be enhanced.

National Policy 27:

Providing Quality Health Care Services for All

The government seeks to localize and scale up health services, review the public health insurance system, and promote fiscal sustainability of the healthcare system. The government is further concerned with improving emergency and first aid services and increasing equitable access to healthcare services.



Box 29: National Policy 27

Providing Quality Health Care Services for All

Through the following policy interventions:

- Reform the public health insurance system.
- Ensure the fiscal sustainability of the healthcare system.
- Localize and improve the quality of health care services.
- Increase equitable access to healthcare services.
- Develop emergency and first aid services and promote emergency preparedness.

National Policy 28:

Improving Citizens' Health and Well-Being

In addition to promoting preventive healthcare, it is critical to raise awareness and promote healthy lifestyles among citizens. While adopting a family health approach, particular attention will be paid to women and children, as well as to women's psychological and physical health during and after birth. In line with relevant national policies, government programmes will be devised to deal with chronic and communicable diseases.



Box 30: National Policy 28

Improving Citizens' Health and Well-Being

Through the following policy interventions:

- Strengthen preventive healthcare, raise awareness, and promote healthy lifestyles.
- Introduce a family healthcare approach.
- Improve and implement national policies on chronic disease management.

10. Resilient Communities

The State of Palestine is the homeland of all Palestinians who reside inside and outside Palestine, including communities isolated as a result of Israeli practices. Colonial practices imposed on us place restrictions on our movement, and Wall construction besieges and geographically segregates our communities. Still, these can in no way undermine the resilience of our people, wherever they are.

Against this backdrop, the government works towards strengthening social cohesion and connectedness between various Palestinian communities by providing support, ensuring safety, promoting resilience, maintaining security, and providing basic services to these communities. The government makes sure that Palestinian communities enjoy a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment and play a role in the state building and development processes. In spite of colonial practices and settlement enterprises in Area C, rural

and marginalized areas must be supported. In addition to reclaiming agricultural land, the once prosperous agriculture sector will be Revitalized. Action will be in place to safeguard the Palestinian cultural heritage and develop the tourism sector and associated industries. Also, we will work towards bridging the gaps created by Israel's colonial practices and rebuild our social fabric. Colonization encroaches on, fragments, and disrupts the cohesion of our society. It creates a sense of despair and alienation among our people, particularly the youth. Nonetheless, the Israeli colonization cannot break our will, which is deeply rooted in our common cultural heritage. Although it aims at depriving us of our rights, tearing our lives apart, and seizing our resources, the colonial power will not be able to undermine our national identity.

The NDP 2021-2023, including the cluster development model, is tailor-made to create a “resistance economy,” which is immune to penetration and dependence, strengthens people's resilience on their land, and contributes to gaining independence. The mission of development is to promote resistance-based resilience of Palestinians on their land, Palestine, build national institutions that provide leverage for ending the occupation, and advance the comprehensive reform of existing institutions. Planning will be designed to promote economic, political, cultural, and social structures. It will lay the foundations for achieving national goals, namely, ending the occupation and fully realizing the modern, democratic, and independent Palestinian State. It will fulfill the dream of Palestinians in the diaspora of returning to and building their homeland. This way, Palestine will be a civilised, progressive state, one that is inclusive and without all forms of discrimination, where no one lives on the margins of society.

National Policy 29: **Ensuring Community Security, Public Safety, and the Rule of Law**

Citizens are entitled to security and safety. The government attaches particular importance to preserving community safety and public security. The government is also responsible for taking necessary measures to respond to disasters and crises. Development requires security so that it can be consistent with citizens' needs. This is made workable by ensuring the governance of security agencies and compliance with a fundamental security doctrine anchored in the protection of the homeland and citizens.



Box 31: National Policy 29

Ensuring Community Security, Public Safety, and the Rule of Law

Through the following policy interventions:

- Implement measures to enhance community safety and public security.
- Strengthen capacity for disaster response and crisis management.
- Govern, strengthen the capacities of, and ensure optimal use of resources by Palestine's security sector institutions.

National Policy 30:

Meeting the Basic Needs of Our Communities

In addition to the need for low-cost social housing, reducing the cost of construction, and ensuring food security, the development process focuses on connecting communities to clean water and wastewater grids, as well as providing energy sources. We also need to develop and integrate transportation patterns and enhance quality transportation service provision to our citizens.



Box 32: National Policy 30

Meeting the Basic Needs of Our Communities

Through the following policy interventions:

- Connect communities to clean water and wastewater grids.
- Expand community access to reliable energy.
- Develop and integrate transportation patterns, and use intelligent and intermodal transport systems.
- Improve public transportation and road safety.
- Support affordable, safe housing.
- Ensure food security.



National Policy 31: **Ensuring a Sustainable Environment**

Permanent development is premised, inter alia, on harnessing and providing new sources of energy. Improving environment quality also makes Palestine greener and contributes to developing alternative energy sources. In a spirit of collective and global responsibility, the NDP 2021-2023 attaches particular importance to climate change and reduction of all forms of environmental pollution. Based on responsibility towards current and future generations, the NDP 2021-2023 also pays special attention to natural resource management and perpetuity.



Box 33: National Policy 31

Ensuring a Sustainable Environment

Through the following policy interventions:

- Reduce and effectively control pollution.
- Adapt to climate change and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.
- Promote integrated solid and hazardous waste management and recycling.
- Expand wastewater management, treatment, and reuse.
- Manage, protect, and promote sustainable use and conservation of natural resources (land, water, and energy).
- Conserve biodiversity, establish nature reserves, and expand green spaces.
- Increase reliance on renewable energy.



National Policy 32: **Revitalizing Agriculture and Strengthening Our Rural Communities**

The agriculture sector plays a role in promoting resilience of the Palestinian people on their land. It provides economic, legal, and political empowerment by maintaining the rights of title holders, upgrading land registration, and undertaking needed surveys. Critically, support must be provided to citizens whose land is confiscated by the occupation.

Cluster development is premised on the promotion of national products, particularly agricultural produce, which enhances self-reliance and enables disengagement from the occupation. It is also essential to strike the required balance between the investment and strengthening of trade relations with other countries and the protection of national products, especially agricultural produce. This will ensure a decent life for farmers and boost their ability to maintain agricultural production needed for the development process.



Box 34: National Policy 32

Revitalizing Agriculture and Strengthening Our Rural Communities

Through the following policy interventions:

- Increase agricultural (plant and livestock) production and develop value chains.
- Protect and support farmers, particularly small ones in threatened and marginalized areas.
- Develop and implement agriculture clusters towards self-reliance and disengagement from the occupation.
- Strengthen the competitiveness of agricultural products.

National Policy 33:

Preserving Our National Identity and Cultural Heritage Based on the Palestinian Narrative

Palestine is rich in history and culture. Albeit small in size, Palestine is abundant in its distinguished human capital. Therefore, we will rely upon creative people in the service of development. This requires an enabling environment to create a culture that fosters innovation and excellence. The “Excellence” approach will be used and developed both consistently and coherently in the future. Our national identity will also be promoted.

Box 35: National Policy 33

Preserving Our National Identity and Cultural Heritage Based on the Palestinian Narrative

Through the following policy interventions:

- Support cultural innovation and production, and nurture talented individuals.
- Implement initiatives to preserve and develop Palestine's cultural heritage.
- Develop cultural and tourism traditional handicrafts.
- Rehabilitate, develop, and promote cultural and religious heritage sites as tourist destinations.
- Develop and implement tourism clusters towards self-reliance and disengagement from the occupation.
- Promote Palestine as a tourist destination.



Conclusion

Moving ahead towards renewing the political system through national elections and promoting citizens' right to political participation, the government will pursue the implementation of the NDP 2021-2023, together with the sector and crosscutting strategies and cluster development plan, recently approved by the government.

At the same time, Palestine is facing an environment with unique challenges. The vicious circle of our reality under a protracted colonization, limited economic growth, sharp decline in foreign aid, and socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have all diminished our capacities to initiate new reforms or capitalize on existing ones, particularly if additional expenditures are needed.

The economic and fiscal challenges that we are currently facing are not a result of the economic and fiscal options adopted by the government. Rather, they are associated with the obstacles imposed by the Israeli occupation. Israel continues to expropriate Palestinian clearance revenues and other revenues agreed under the Protocol on Economic Relations (Paris Protocol). Israel also denies access to pension contributions and compensations owed by Palestinians employed in the Israeli labor market. Furthermore, foreign aid has declined considerably. The State of Palestine is still in need of this aid and of ensuring its sustainability until such time it becomes capable of delivering on its vast economic potential.

Since the major reason behind our plight and economic and fiscal

challenges lies in the colonization of our land through which Israeli controls and seizes our resources, the world community of nations must provide political support and financial assistance to the State of Palestine to preserve its rights and ensure its fiscal sustainability. The international community must also place pressure on Israel to discourage its persistence on implementing the annexation and expansion plan. The two-state solution will be implemented as a unanimous solution agreed to by the international community as a whole.

One deplorable paradox is that Palestine does not only suffer from pervasive human rights violations committed by the settler colonial regime: it is also challenged by economic de-development as a result of this colonialism. As was done by other colonial powers in history, the occupation is channelling trade in one direction in favor of Israel, transforming infrastructure to be in service of its colonial project, and creating parallel colonial infrastructure. Israel adapts the Palestinian economy so that it be complementary to and dependent on the Israeli economy. Imports are allowed from Israel with the intention of undermining Palestinian national products. This has made the entire Palestinian economy effectively dependent on Israel and subservient to the Israeli economy.

Accordingly, the NDP 2021-2023 has reviewed a strategic framework for designing new sector and crosscutting strategies and implementing existing processes. Unfortunately, it seems that a negligible amount,

if any, of additional funding will be available to us to support us in moving ahead with these initiatives over the upcoming three years. This does not mean that the reform agenda should be put on hold. On the contrary, we have to make every effort to expedite the reform process in areas where it can be implemented within the bounds of a sustainable fiscal framework.

Reform requires the provision of resources. We are, thus, concerned with the destructive impact of downsized assistance in the midst of a situation of escalating settler colonialism, and we need to engage in an open dialogue with the international community about this threat to our reform. As was originally envisaged, occupation should have been ended by now. To reduce dependence on the Israeli labor market and donor funds, we need to stimulate Palestinian economic growth, so that the national economy is capable of creating employment opportunities and generating income.

Since the beginning of the occupation in 1967 and the later establishment of the PA in 1994, the Palestinian economy has continued to be crippled by an accumulation of Israeli measures, creating a significant gap between the Palestinian population needs and resources available to meet these needs. Provisional political and economic agreements with Israel have created a reality in which the Palestinian government manages the population but is deprived of control over its national resources. Since the occupation, Israeli measures have ravaged the infrastructure and undermined productive sectors, particularly agriculture. To culminate the deprivation of Palestine of any prospect for development and growth, Israel has further created and developed parallel settlements at the expense of the Palestinian State and

Palestinian population development and growth. Added to this, the Paris Protocol no longer serves the Palestinian economy. Even those items in favor of the Palestinian economy have not been put to use.

Beyond doubt, there is a path that helps us to move forward. This can break the vicious circle and create ample and conducive opportunities to our advantage. If the world community of nations exerts enough pressure on Israel to end its colonization of our land and resources, this will be the impetus required to launch the development process and significantly increase employment opportunities across Palestine. Additionally, this will put an end to our dependence on foreign aid and assistance. Palestine cannot face these challenges alone. To ensure the two-state solution is applicable and viable, the international community must undertake concerted action to ensure that an end is put to the Israeli occupation and agenda of annexation.



