



European universities should be stopped until the Israelis reopen Palestinian universities.

Discussion in a fifth workshop centered on the role of the NGOs in the socioeconomic development and health care in the occupied Palestinian territory. The efforts of this group were prefaced by a conference on the same topic in the preceding days. The workshop emphasized that any support projects should take into consideration the greater degree of Palestinian self-reliance which has grown with the intifada, and be based on the existing Palestinian national infrastructure. Special mention was made of the crucial role of women in the intifada, and how this could be supported via specific projects, whether cooperatives or childcare. There was an appeal to launch a campaign throughout Europe to inform about the deterioration of socioeconomic conditions for the Palestinians under occupation, aiming to provide them with more protection and to obtain the release of the intifada prisoners first and foremost the children.

INTERNATIONAL NGO MEETING

The sixth UN international NGO meeting was held immediately after the

European regional NGO symposium, with the theme: Intifada - the continuing struggle of the Palestinian people for independence.

In the opening session a statement was delivered by Alois Mock, Austrian minister of foreign affairs, who called for the immediate reopening of all schools in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, and reiterated Austria's longstanding position of working for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement through the convening of an international conference on the Middle East.

Ronald Spiers, UN undersecretary general, delivered a message from the UN secretary general, expressing grave concern about Israel's harsh measures against the Palestinian population. He «was particularly disturbed at the large number of deaths and injuries, including women and children, detention of thousands of Palestinians, and numerous deportations in violation of Security Council resolutions.»

The next statement was given by Abba Claude Diallo, chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. He noted that 20% of the 700 plus Palestinians who have been killed by the Israelis, are under the age of 16. He condemned Israel's «intolerable

practices» and called for «measures to assure the protection of the Palestinian people living under occupation,» and for «continued efforts towards a negotiated settlement.»

Don Betz, chairman of the international coordinating committee of NGOs on the question of Palestine, said in his statement that the intifada was the reason why the world knew and cared more about the fate of Palestinians than at any time in the past.

The last statement was a message from PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, president of the State of Palestine, read aloud by Daoud Barakat, Palestine's permanent observer to the UN Vienna. President Arafat said that despite the suffering and sacrifices of the Palestinian people, the PNC had adopted a peace initiative which indicates a genuine desire to achieve peace on the basis of international legitimacy. He accused the US administration of adopting a double standard with respect to the Palestinian question: «... while it pursued the defense of human rights everywhere, the United States was defending the violation of national and human rights of the Palestinian people by the occupation authorities.» Arafat added that the US continues to pursue a policy which does not help peace, by supporting the Shamir plan ►