

Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

Statement by the Delegation of Canada

July 31, 2012

We have noted the manner in which the Palestinian Observer Delegation has been seated. We ardently object to this situation as it may give a misleading impression. Canada finds it particularly unhelpful that their delegation continue to distract the global agenda with an issue that won't resolve the real issues on the ground. Canada does not recognize a Palestinian state, and consistent with that position we do not think it at all appropriate that the Palestinian delegation be seated in a manner that could cause confusion in this meeting. To have this highly political matter raised here in this way is profoundly unhelpful, both to the work of the Conference on Geographical Names and to the process of achieving a lasting settlement in the Middle East. We call on each delegation to distance itself from this effort and encourage everyone around this table to get back to work on the real issues that need to be discussed in this forum.

Canada supports a two-state solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, reached through a negotiated settlement between the parties which will guarantee Israel's right to live in peace and security with its neighbours and lead to the creation of a viable and independent Palestinian state. There is no viable alternative to a negotiated two-state solution. Unilateral acts are unhelpful and present challenges to the peace process.

We would ask that the official record reflect this statement. We understand that this approach, with which we disagree, is based on an interpretation of the past special practice of this particular conference. Canada does not consider this to form a precedent that can be used in other conferences. As such, there can be no argument that an interpretation based past special practices in this particular conference can serve as any general precedent in other conferences. Canada would like to clearly disassociate itself from this decision