

Mr. Danon (Israel):

Once again, we meet as we continue to hear calls for a one-sided draft resolution against Israel. We have been hearing those calls all year. In fact, we have been hearing calls to act against Israel since we joined the United Nations, 62 years ago. There was a time when Israel could look to this institution with a sense of hope — hope that, after the evils of the Holocaust, the nations of the world could come together to bring about an era of peace, and the Jewish people would finally be free from hatred and prejudice. But this institution has betrayed those hopes — day after day, month after month, year after year — by funding bodies that promote anti-Israel activism at the United Nations. We see that in the endless stream of biased reports and the one-sided resolutions whose only purpose is to score political points, and not solve pressing problems. When it comes to Israel, the record of hypocrisy and dishonesty goes on and on. Just last week, UNESCO had the nerve to adopt a resolution denying the connection between the Jewish people and the Holy City of Jerusalem. “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.” That verse from Psalm 137, written by our King David almost 3,000 years ago, was uttered by the Jewish people as they were exiled from Jerusalem following the destruction of their temple. It is also recited by every Jewish groom on his wedding day. UNESCO’s decision is an embarrassing stain on the pages of the history of the United Nations. But the Jewish people will endure. The attempts to cut us off from our homeland and our heritage will not succeed. We will remain in our capital, Jerusalem, forever. As we open the seventy-first session, it is time for the United Nations to answer for the slander and the defamation of the Jewish State by so many here in this building. Let us take a look at that record together. Just last Friday, this body was witness to a farce. Israeli organizations were called to provide their expert opinions on the latest developments in Judea and Samaria. Let me be clear: Israel is a proud and thriving democracy, and we cherish the freedom of speech. We do not respect those who spread lies and deceit about Israel. In 2016, three United Nations agencies provided funding for B’Tselem. That is no coincidence. It is part of a cynical cycle in which the United Nations funds B’Tselem and similar organizations that have a particular political agenda. They are then invited to provide so-called expert testimony. That is direct interference in our democratic process by anti-Israel elements here at the United Nations. I call on the Council to put an end to funding from the United Nations of extremist organizations that seek to harm Israel. Last May, at the meeting

of the World Health Organization, the General Assembly singled out Israel as the only violator of health rights in the entire world. Apparently, the innocent men, women and children who have been burned and choked to death by al-Assad's chemical weapons are of no concern to the World Health Organization. Last July I visited the hospital in Safed, in the north of Israel. I met with the Syrian people injured in the ongoing civil war who were being treated by Israeli doctors. The World Health Organization did not mention those lifesaving efforts — not even once. That absurd resolution does not stand alone. The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women concluded its annual session by condemning only one country for violating women's rights anywhere on the planet. The Commission had nothing to say about Iran, where women can face execution by stoning for the so-called crime of adultery. They were silent about places **19/10/2016** The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question **S/PV.7792** 16-33267 **11/64** where forced child marriage, official discrimination against women and so-called honour killings are widespread. Instead, the Organization condemned Israel, where a woman is President of the Supreme Court, where a woman sits as Governor of the Bank of Israel, and where a woman serves as Minister of Justice. To make matters worse, a Commission on the Status of Women report (E/2016/27) blamed Israel for domestic violence committed by Palestinian men against Palestinian women. Instead of making it absolutely clear that there is never an excuse for violence against women, the report followed the shameful United Nations practice of giving excuses for violence and blaming Israel for every ill in Palestinian society. The anti-Israel bias is systematic and runs through the organs and bodies of this institution. The Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine and the Division for Palestinian Rights are the only Secretariat bodies that are dedicated to a specific conflict. And let no one be fooled — they are dedicated to promoting only one side, one narrative and one unequivocal message of anti-Israel propaganda. The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has also disgraced itself with its anti-Israel activity. Non-governmental organizations, accredited to the Committee, regularly post vile images on social media, such as cartoons comparing Israeli soldiers to Nazis. That is pure hatred from official United Nations bodies. At a time when so many are in need of humanitarian assistance, it is a disgrace that millions of dollars in United Nations funds — money collected from taxpayers around the world — fund bodies whose only purpose is to spread lies, incitement and hateful propaganda against Israel. Yet year

after year, the United Nations renews the mandates of those bodies. Year after year the propaganda machine continues. Just last month, the Department of Public Information organized a United Nations International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East in South Africa. The seminar was completely one-sided. Almost all of the speakers were well-known for their anti-Israel positions. The current Palestinian representative to the United Nations, the former Palestinian representative to the European Union and other United Nations representatives and officials were all invited to speak at the seminar. But not a single Israeli official was there to represent Israel, to tell our story. The speakers expressed open support for the notorious Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement, which is conducting a global campaign of misinformation and outright slander against my country. And let us not forget about the United Nations hall of shame, the Human Rights Council in Geneva. Let us call it what it really is, with some of the world's worst human rights abusers condemning the only democracy in the Middle East. The only standard that it follows is the United Nations double standard — one set of rules for Israel, another set of rules for every other country. The Human Rights Council has a special agenda item dealing only with Israel. No other country — neither Iran, Yemen, Syria nor North Korea — none of them is singled out. As we the General Assembly begins its seventy-first session, we can count on the United Nations to continue that systematic hostility towards Israel. In fact, the bias in United Nations resolutions can actually be counted. General Assembly resolutions have use the term “grave” 513 times to describe Israel's actions — 513 times. And for the rest of the world, for the countries that engage in systematic human rights abuses, in torture and ethnic cleansing — only 14 times. Who will speak out against that moral absurdity? More people have been killed in Syria in the past few months than in the entire history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, yet the United Nations has adopted six times as many resolutions against Israel as it has against all other countries. Not just more than against Syria, but six times as many resolutions against Israel than all other countries on the face of the planet combined. The box by my side contains piles and piles of United Nations documents — an endless number of pages, United Nations resolutions, reports, declarations, decisions and statements, all denouncing Israel. And that is just from the previous session, from October 2015 until today. Year after year, this institution produces the same documents, filled with the same outrageous accusations and absurd demands. When people speak about the United Nations obsession with Israel, that is what they are talking about. That box is proof of that obsession. It is a monument to

the deep-rooted bias against Israel. It makes a mockery of what the United Nations should stand for, and all those who stand by and let it happen year after year should be ashamed. Let me ask the representatives in this Chamber, let me ask the Palestinian representative, if they really **S/PV.7792** The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question **19/10/2016 12/64 16-33267** believe that the ongoing campaign to demonize Israel is doing anything to help the Palestinian people. Do any of those decisions create opportunities for Palestinian women? Do any of those endless resolutions do anything to help a single Palestinian child? Of course they do not. Enough — enough with the incitement, enough with the show. Let the Palestinian leadership start caring about their people. Yes, the Palestinian leadership knows how to mount shows, but it is not helping even one Palestinian. Those thousands of debates and documents do not help the Palestinian people. Now that we have seen and understood the United Nations shameful record, let us take a look at the real Israel — the Israel that is left out of those reports. For 68 years, the people of Israel have woken up every morning with the threat of war and terror hanging over their heads. Yet, despite all the challenges, we have built a vibrant democracy and a thriving economy. In the twenty-first century, Israel is a place of equality and opportunity. Thanks to the creative spirit and energy of our people, Israeli innovation is helping to improve lives and create opportunities around the world, in agricultural technology, in cybersecurity, solar energy and so many other fields. We are always looking to share what we have learned with others, to build strong and mutually beneficial partnerships with nations around the world. Now, let us take a look at the countries that are leading the disgraceful campaign of discrimination against Israel. When was the last time we heard of Iran, Libya, Tunisia or Venezuela making any advances in medicine or in water technology that could help the world? Those are some of the nations that are leading the efforts to demonize Israel. Standing back and allowing them to use the United Nations as a platform for their blatant hypocrisy undermines the integrity of this institution. Anti-Israel bias here at the United Nations is not a law of nature. As Prime Minister Netanyahu said when he came to the United Nations last month, “The sooner the United Nations obsession with Israel ends, the better — the better for Israel, the better for other countries, the better for the United Nations itself” (*A/71/PV.14, p. 30*). There is a way forward. It is time for the United Nations to start thinking outside the box. Those acts of political theatre do not help the Palestinian people, nor do they help to bring the two sides together. But we will not give up. We will continue to fight back

against the slander and the lies. The founding vision of the United Nations is still a symbol of hope for the Jewish people, for the State of Israel and for all humankind.