

Closing remarks on the occasion of the visit of the President of the
Palestinian Authority, H.E. Mahmoud Abbas, to the States General
Thursday 29 October 2015

Your Excellency,

At the end of this meeting I would like to thank you, on behalf of the President of the Senate and myself, for visiting our parliament. With great interest we listened to your remarks on the political developments currently taking place in your region and about the relations of the Netherlands with the Palestinian people. Relations which, I may say, are in the forefront of the public and political debate in the Netherlands. As the next meeting, with members of the committees on Foreign Affairs of both Houses , will no doubt show you.

The political interest in your country is reflected in the frequent visits from both sides. Four years ago you visited our parliament. And Members of Parliament have frequently visited your country.

The collaboration between the Palestinian Authority and the Netherlands is multifaceted. The Palestinian territories are included in the Dutch programme for bilateral development cooperation. We are pleased to learn about the developments in the Palestinian economy, although we fully understand the challenges you are still facing.

Economic and social prosperity, however, depends largely on a politically secure and stable environment. Therefore progress is urgently needed in the Middle East Peace Process, as the recent eruption of violence has showed again. But this will need hard work and dedication. Also in view of the worrisome developments in other countries in the Arab region.

Your Excellency, we greatly appreciate the fact that you have found the time to visit the Netherlands, and your visit to our Parliament in particular is memorable. We hope that your stay in our country is pleasant and that the meetings you have are fruitful. I am sure that they will contribute to the further development of our political and economic ties. And allow me, mr. President, to wish you every success with your important, but difficult task leading your country to a better and more stable future.