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**About Gheit's address at the opening session of the
Economic and Social Council at the ministerial
level, 113th ordinary session**

15 February 2024

Your Excellency Mr. Youssef Mahmoud Al-Shimali,

Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply,

In the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,

President of the current session of the Economic and Social
Council,

Your Highnesses, Excellencies, and Ministers,

At the outset, I extend my heartfelt congratulations, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the current session of the Economic and Social Council. I wish you every success, confident that your experience in this esteemed council over the past years will significantly contribute to facilitating this session's work. My gratitude goes to the Republic of Yemen and Minister Muhammad Hazam Al-Ashwal for adeptly managing the previous session.

Mr. President,

This session unfolds amidst extremely complex and perilous regional and international circumstances. I specifically highlight the plight of the Gaza Strip, which has endured steadfastly since 7 October. Palestinians face genocidal crimes perpetrated by the



occupying power, fuelled by international inertia that emboldens further barbarism. The occupation no longer conceals its brutal plans, and we closely follow their announcements of intent to invade Rafah, where over 1.4 million Palestinians sought refuge from indiscriminate bombings. This potential invasion poses a humanitarian catastrophe and threatens to inflame the regional situation. We vehemently warn of its consequences and appeal to all parties, even supporters of the occupation, to recognise the gravity of the situation and urgently act to halt these perilous plans before it is too late.

Those painful events exposed the true and unsightly face of international politics' double standards. Principles crumbled and disappeared when confronted with the harsh reality. Masks fell from those claiming to defend human values. Whether defending Israel's right to self-defence while denying its status as an occupying power or turning a blind eye to this fact, the value of justice and international systems is questioned if they can't achieve a ceasefire and halt this gruesome daily massacre.

Mr. President,

Arabs have unequivocally rejected all Israeli attempts to liquidate the Palestinian cause and displace the population from their lands. Exploiting the events of 7 October, Israel accelerated its ethnic cleansing plans and entertained illusions of monopolising the entire land from the river to the sea, treating it as if it were devoid of a population.

In this context, I urge your esteemed council to formulate an urgent action plan with a specific time frame for implementing the content of the humanitarian response document presented by the State of Palestine, which is submitted to you today. This plan should encompass various humanitarian, economic, and social aspects across all Palestinian territories, aiming to alleviate the daily living hardships faced by Palestinians.

Ladies and Gentlemen,



As representatives of the economic, trade, and development sectors in the member states, you are well aware of how the entire Arab region suffers when parts of it are exposed to violent crises. The war has caused turmoil that affects the entire region, with the potential for a greater escalation and resulting consequences adversely impacting the economic situation. This includes heightened security threats in the Red Sea, concerns about disruptions to supply chains, and a decline in tourism, all of which harm the investment climate.

The increased frequency of crises prompts a shift in Arab priorities towards saving the present and minimising losses rather than focusing on the future. We must recognise that these challenges and crises compel us to foster greater solidarity and closer cooperation. Collective action at all levels is crucial for resolving problems under the umbrella of the League of Arab States, where achieving stability and development stands as one of its lofty goals.

Mr. President,

I would like to inform your esteemed council that the League of Arab States, in collaboration with ESCWA, has developed the "Arab Vision 2045" document, officially launched during the 31st session of the ESCWA Committee held at the General Secretariat's headquarters last December.

This vision encapsulates our collective hopes and aspirations for a brighter future for our children. It is structured around six interconnected axes, emphasising our unwavering belief in the benefits of Arab solidarity. I encourage you to review it, and I eagerly await your valuable suggestions and recommendations.

In conclusion, I highlight that your esteemed council's meeting will address crucial issues related to Arab economic and social integration. Today's session will also play a pivotal role in preparing the economic and social dossier for the upcoming regular



Arab summit scheduled to take place in the sisterly Kingdom of Bahrain on 16 May. I extend my best wishes for your success.

Peace, mercy, and blessings of God.