

**Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General
on the Closure of Gaza**

The Secretary-General is increasingly concerned about the situation in the Gaza Strip and its impact on the economic life. He notes in particular the new figures released by the World Bank which show that in the last month alone 3,190 businesses have closed down forcing over 65,000 people into unemployment. If what is left of Gaza's economy is allowed to collapse, poverty levels, already affecting an estimated two thirds of households, will rise further and the people of Gaza will become near totally aid dependent.

The Secretary-General calls for every effort to be made to open all crossings into Gaza for the passage of humanitarian supplies and workers, as well as commercial goods. In particular, he calls for the Karni Crossing to be opened immediately for the passage of commercial imports and exports. In addition, the Secretary-General calls for the opening of the Rafah Crossing to allow into Gaza more than four thousand Palestinians stranded in Egypt.

The continued restrictions on Gaza will have a severe humanitarian impact and can only cause further suffering to the people there.

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