

The following resolution was adopted by the 2011 Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly during its Spring Session on May 6-7 at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia. "Whereas" clauses are listed as background for Voting Members. The Assembly votes on "Resolved" clauses only.

Investment for Positive Change in Palestine

Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has declared its partnership in ministry with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, stated its commitment to demonstrate “balanced care for all parties in the conflict” (2005 Strategy), and advocate for a “viable, contiguous, independent Palestinian state and a secure Israel” (2005 Strategy); and

Whereas, Palestinian civil society needs to develop the infrastructure of a viable state for the successful implementation of a political solution between the Palestinians and the Israelis; and

Whereas, in August, 2009, Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian National Authority detailed his working plan for developing the infrastructure and institutions of the future Palestinian State, including building government offices, a stock market, an airport, a free market economy, and an effective security apparatus ¹; and

Whereas, these efforts appear to be bearing fruit in an economic boom in the West Bank, where the growth rate reached 8.5 percent in 2009 ² and expanded to an estimated 9 percent in the first half of 2010 ³; and

Whereas, during this time there has been an increase in foreign investment in the West Bank, and Palestinian real estate developers have begun the first modern, planned Palestinian city north of Ramallah ⁴; and

¹ Salam Fayyad, “Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State,” Program of the Thirteenth Government, Palestinian National Authority, August 27, 2009 (copy available at <http://www.palestine-pmc.com/details.asp?cat=2&id=2075>)

² International Monetary Fund, “Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework for the West Bank and Gaza: Fifth Review of Progress,” Staff Report for the Meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (Madrid April 13, 2010) (can be obtained at <http://www.imf.org/external/country/WBG/RR/2010/041310.pdf>)

³ International Monetary Fund, “Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework for the West Bank and Gaza: Sixth Review of Progress,” Staff Report for the Meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (September 21, 2010) (can be obtained at <http://www.imf.org/external/country/WBG/RR/2010/092110.pdf>).

⁴ See e.g., Portland Trust Palestinian Economic Bulletin (Nov. 2010), U.S. Senator John Kerry Visits The West Bank's First Planned Community (March 1, 2010) (can be obtained at Palestinenote.com).

- Whereas, these positive trends are also being supported by some measures taken by Israel that enhance Palestinian economic activity and improve the security situation in the West Bank⁵; and
- Whereas, positive economic investment in Palestine is a more productive approach than boycott, divestment and/or economic sanction campaigns; and
- Whereas, boycott, divestment and economic sanctions punish and blame one side in a complex conflict as if it bears all the responsibility for failing to reach a peaceful and just solution, thereby increasing the fear and isolation of the Israeli public and decreasing the likelihood of their being willing to take the risk inherent in any peace agreement; therefore, be it
- Resolved, that the ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod Assembly memorialize the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly meeting in Orlando, Florida, to encourage the church's members, congregations, synods, and agencies to consider making positive economic investments in those Palestinian projects and businesses that peacefully strengthen the economic and social fabric of Palestinian society.

⁵ State of Israel, "Measures Taken by Israel in Support of Developing the Palestinian Economy and Socio-Economic Structure," Report of the Government of Israel to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (New York, September 21, 2010) (can be obtained at <http://www.mfa.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/4F678C2F-133C-4CAC-BA18-076F8CCB9407/0/IsraelsReporttoAHL210910.pdf>). An economic growth rate in Gaza is also estimated at 16 percent in 2010 driven by the gradual easing of the blockade. (International Monetary Fund, "Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework for the West Bank and Gaza: Sixth Review of Progress," Staff Report for the Meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (September 21, 2010) (can be obtained at <http://www.imf.org/external/country/WBG/RR/2010/092110.pdf>).