Remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton after meeting Foreign Minister of Jordan Nasser Judeh, 29 August

It is a pleasure to be back. It feels only a few minutes since I was last here. You and I have continued our discussions between these visits for I rely very much on your good offices to keep me informed of the developments and also your personal advice on some of the issues that face us.

May I say I was delighted to put out a statement in support of the work that is going on in Jordan, the reforms that you are currently implementing and are now before parliament. As Jordan moves forward to develop economically and politically, we want to be a partner and a friend in that process. We know how committed you are and we will continue to find ways of enhancing our support, not just directly but through the instruments that we work with - through the banks, through the other organisations.

I have just come here from discussions with the Palestinian authority and the Israeli government about the Middle East Peace Process. My message was clear - we want to see a negotiated settlement that will bring peace to the people of Israel and to the people of Palestine and will support peace and security in this region which increasingly has consequences across the world.

I believe in the time of change which we have seen in our neighbourhood and we have discussed a little bit events in Syria and what has happened now in Libya.

That is why it is even more important to get the current leadership on both Israeli and Palestinian side to see their responsibilities in finding a peaceful solution. My premises is to enhance the possibility of getting those talks to start and more importantly to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

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1 Check against delivery
In that discussion I have talked with both sides about a range of possibilities. There is no yet a resolution of any kind on the table for the UN in September and we should not get too focused on September.

It is for the Palestinians to decide themselves what kind of approach they want to take with the United Nations. They will do so in dialogue with colleagues from Arab countries and in full knowledge of the implications for the rest of us. The question for me is on behalf of the EU 27 to try and understand as soon as I can exactly what might be put forward, if anything, and on the basis of that to understand where I think the European Union will stand. I believe that one of the benefits for supporting talks in this region that the EU brings to both sides and to the region more broadly is the unity of the EU. The 27 countries with different histories and backgrounds, different relationships with the region, different strengths of views nonetheless have a common position on the issue of the Middle East Peace Process, position I am very proud to represent. So in a rather selfish way I look at the implications of keeping that strong position because I believe it is for the greater benefit of the Palestinian people and also for the Israeli people to have that.

But as these moments arise, they also give us an opportunity and that opportunity helps us to put the political pressure in the right sense of that on those who actually could really begin the talks now. And I have been trying to impress on all the significance and importance of making gestures that could enable the talks to begin now.