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Identical letters dated 7 January 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

In the light of the deteriorating military situation in the Gaza Strip and the continuous Israeli aggression, including the massive land operation, I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement delivered by President Hosni Mubarek, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, at the joint press conference with the President of France yesterday, 6 January 2009, in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Maged **Abdelaziz**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

Annex to the identical letters dated 7 January 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

Opening statement of His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, to the joint press conference with the President of the French Republic

Sharm El-Sheikh

6 January 2009

I extend my welcome to President Sarkozy and express my appreciation for his participation in our joint consultations yesterday and today on the grave situation in the Gaza Strip. I have brought President Sarkozy up to date on Egypt's efforts and its plan to contain the situation, and he in turn has briefed me on the outcome of his negotiations yesterday in Israel.

The situation in Gaza continues to deteriorate for a second week, with continual destructive and deadly Israeli attacks targeting innocent civilians, causing tensions to escalate and undermining regional stability.

Egypt, which opened the door to peace in the Middle East and has supported the Palestinian cause for 60 years, cannot accept a continuation of the current situation, with the Palestinian and Israeli sides clinging to their positions and the Security Council delaying the fulfilment of its responsibilities.

Egypt has been pursuing active efforts since the first day of the hostilities, and today I am putting forward an initiative specifically designed to contain the situation, based on the following elements:

1. Israel and the Palestinian factions shall agree to an immediate ceasefire for a specified period to allow the opening of corridors for aid to the inhabitants of the Strip and to allow Egypt to pursue efforts towards a complete and permanent ceasefire.
2. Egypt calls on Israel and the Palestinian sides to meet immediately to conclude arrangements and guarantees to prevent a repetition of the present escalation. The causes of that escalation, including the question of securing the borders, should be addressed to allow for the reopening of border crossings and the lifting of the blockade. Egypt is prepared to take part in these discussions along with the Palestinian and Israeli sides, and with the European Union and the other members of the Quartet.

3. Egypt renews its call on the Palestinian National Authority and all Palestinian factions to respond to Egyptian efforts to bring about Palestinian reconciliation, which is indispensable for overcoming the challenges facing the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause both in the current critical situation and in the future.

Egypt is carrying out its responsibility in putting forward this initiative and expects the Israeli and Palestinian sides, as well as other regional and international parties, to fulfil their responsibilities in order to stop the bloodshed and renew hopes for peace.

I again extend my welcome to President Sarkozy and invite him to take the podium.
