



*On the path to reform within the PLO structures and for bringing about a common uniform Palestinian agenda*

Palestine needs strong representation and a united appearance in order for future negotiations with Israel to be able to succeed. As the official representation of all Palestinians, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in its current condition is not strong, nor is it contributing to the unification of the Palestinians.

It is in urgent need of reform. On the whole, consensus about this exists in Palestine. What is less clear is what this reform should look like. In order to bring about a discussion forum for the various PLO member parties and provide space for planning reform, the FES in conjunction with the Palestinian Planning Center (PPC) organized a series of



seminars under the title of “Toward a Common National Agenda.” The events took place in Gaza in November and December 2007 – in other words, at a time when, as a result of the dissolution of the Palestinian unity government, there was a great deal of friction between the individual parties, especially in the Gaza Strip.

A number of encounters took place, at each of which two representatives from each PLO movement in turn came to present their positions and views on reforming the PLO, and then engage in a discussion with the experts, journalists and politicians present. The results were presented at a joint final session. Agreement was reached on the common goal of maintaining and strengthening the PLO as the Palestinians’ sole legitimate

representation, the necessity for immediate reform of the PLO Council (PNC), the need to introduce a strict separation between the structures of the Palestinian Authority and those of the PLO, and to assure progress toward integrating those Palestinian political trends not yet represented in the PLO.

The series of seminars provided a forum which does not exist anywhere else for exchanges about PLO reform between the different outlooks. In addition, it helped the individual parties to work out their stances with regard to PLO reform – positions which had not previously been expressed clearly. As a result, an important basic condition has been met for the complicated but necessary process of renewal. The FES, together with its partner the PPC, will continue to provide its support for the process of reforming the PLO.