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Statement by
H.E Ambassador R.M. Marty M. Natalegawa,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia

before the Special Meeting
of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

20 June 2008

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first express my delegation's appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this special meeting of the Committee to mark 60 years of dispossession of Palestine refugees.

I wish also to thank the Permanent Observer of Palestine and the representative of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for their respective statements, providing an update on the situation of the Palestine refugees as well as information on efforts being made to address that situation.

We thank equally the experts who have offered their views on the prospects of a solution, as well as modalities. We recognize the invaluable work done by civil society as part of our collective efforts to alleviate the plight of the Palestine refugees.

This special meeting provides a forum for member states and relevant international organizations, as well as civil society which work on the issue, to reflect on ways to collectively address the predicament of Palestine refugees and their denial of justice in the past six decades, and to renew our commitment to finding a just solution to the issue in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 of 1948.

Mr. Chairman,

Palestinians who fled their home as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict and their descendants have gone through humiliation and dispossession for far too long as refugees.

We certainly cannot understate the importance of finding a just solution of the Palestine refugees as a moral and legal obligation for all of us under relevant international laws.

We, therefore, are of the view that the international community need to give more attention to the plight of these Palestinians. In this regard, we continue to attach great importance to the work of this Committee as a forum for considering and recommending to the General Assembly a programme of implementation designed to enable all Palestinians to exercise their collective and individual rights to national independence and sovereignty and to return

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to the homes and property from which they were displaced and uprooted. Its method of work, which allows it to reach out wider stake holders, including civil society, is certainly useful.

At the practical level, the work of UNRWA to deliver vital assistance to Palestine refugees is of great importance. We support every effort to strengthen partnerships between UNRWA, the host authorities, donors and partner agencies.

Mr. Chairman,

We understand that a just and long lasting solution of the issue is dependent on the political settlement of Arab-Israel conflicts. We, however, believe that the reverse is also true, that without a just solution to the issue of Palestine refugees, a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians and in the whole region cannot be achieved.

Addressing the issue of Palestine refugees, therefore, should be part and parcel of efforts to achieve political settlement of the conflict.

After decades of suffering and loss inflicted upon Palestinians, in particular those who remain refugees, finding a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive settlement to the conflict is thus absolutely critical. The international community should redouble its collective efforts to promote the realization of the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, as well as of the rights of the Palestinian people, including their rights to self-determination and the rights of the Palestine refugees to return. Indonesia is committed to this endeavor, on the basis of the relevant international laws, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1515 (2003) as well as the Madrid terms of reference, the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative.

We believe that building a viable Palestinian economy constitutes a vital building block of the efforts to achieve lasting settlement of the conflict and the creation of durable peace in the region. We wish to underscore the importance of the continued support and assistance of the international community to rebuild the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory. In this connection, Indonesia and South Africa, in the framework of the New Asian African Strategic Partnership, will convene a Ministerial Conference on Capacity Building for Palestine in Jakarta on 14 and 15 July 2008.

Thank you.