Statement by the Representative of Malawi, Brian Bowler

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

November 29, 2010

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we are here today to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. On behalf of the African Group, I would like to join my voice to those of my predecessors in thanking you, Mr. Chairman, for organizing this event.

This gives us the opportunity to reaffirm once again our solidarity with the Palestinian people, who for 60 years have been experiencing a traumatic situation because of Israeli occupation. This situation in the Middle East is a major concern for the international community. Do we need to remind you here that if there is one question which crystalizes all concerns in that part of the world, it is the Palestinian question.

Mr. Chairman, the United Nations and the international community have named today International Day of Solidarity. Then our thoughts to the people of Palestine living in the Occupied Territories, notably those in Gaza, who are living in a very critical socioeconomic and humanitarian situation because of the blockade imposed by the Israeli authorities and the damaging consequences of the Israeli military action against the Gaza Strip in December 2008 and January 2009. Our thoughts are also with the millions of Palestinian refugees who live inside the occupied territories and in neighboring countries. Their situation remains a cause of serious concern for the international community.

And, Mr. Chairman, today is a day to pay tribute to UNRRA for the remarkable work it does in the field by contributing the necessary assistance to Palestinian refugees and those living in particularly difficult situations because of the multiple restrictions imposed on their staff and the harassment and intimidation they suffer on a daily basis. We also praise the role of civil society and engineers who are working in the field.

Mr. Chairman, certainly the Palestinian question cannot be postponed indefinitely. For a long time a negotiated solution with an independent and sovereign Palestinian state within recognized borders living in peace and security alongside the state of Israel have been defined. It is therefore time, Mr. Chairman, to bring about this noble objective. It is important to guarantee the implementation of the relevant resolutions of our organization advocating the removal of the embargo against Gaza and the relaunching of negotiations in order to bring about a comprehensive peace.

Sustained diplomatic efforts must be deployed in order to bring all the parties to the negotiating table, and on a parallel basis, Israel must commit to dismantle settlements and cease its activities regarding new settlements. Israel must also commit to removing the blockade imposed on Gaza and to create favorable conditions for restarting negotiations.

Mr. Chairman, along the road to this fair, comprehensive and lasting peace, Africa reaffirms its firm support for the initiatives of the United Nations, the Quartet, the European Union, the OSC, the Nonaligned Movement and other international organizations.

Today I would like to stress the fact that the -- it is now time for the valiant Palestinian people to recover their rights and have an independent and -- independent state. The African Group will spare no effort in its contribution for a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question which is at the heart of the situation in the Middle East. Thank you.