



**Statement by H.E. Dr. R. M. Marty M. Natalegawa Minister
for Foreign Affairs Republic of Indonesia At the High Level
Segment of the 19th Session of the Human Rights Council,
Geneva, 28 February 2012**

Tuesday, 28 February 2012

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**H.E. Dr. R. M. Marty M. Natalegawa
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Republic of Indonesia**

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Madam President of the Human Rights Council,
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Let me start by reiterating Indonesia's firm support for the work of the Human Rights Council, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and other institutions of the UN human rights machinery.

Whose work has become even more vital today, in this era of profound changes.

Changes that have a major impact on global conscience on human rights and democracy.

Changes whose magnitude Indonesia truly understands.

As Indonesia has gone through a similar process before. When we took a bold step to embrace democracy. And to overhaul our system of governance. To advance human rights and fundamental freedom in every aspect of our life.

It was not an easy process.

The challenges were enormous. Of such a great magnitude that, at one point, some observers predicted the end of Indonesia as a nation.

Yet, we prevail. And we emerge stronger than ever.

Today, Indonesia stands proud as an archipelago of peace.

As the world's 3rd biggest democracy. As a nation proud of its diversity. And as one of the world's emerging economies.

We are thankful that the world, too, has acknowledged our transformation.

This is reflected, among others, when 184 United Nations member States gave us their strong votes of confidence in May last year for our candidacy to the Human Rights Council.

Indeed, we admit that we need to do more. And that there is much room for us to improve.

Yet, we remain committed. Because we realize that democracy truly delivers. That if implemented faithfully, it brings dividends. In the form of peace, and stability, and progress.

This is why we continue to consolidate our democracy. A commitment that we translate into concrete actions – within our borders, and beyond.

Therefore, along with other ASEAN member States, Indonesia has been taking concrete steps to mainstream human rights principles and values into ASEAN cooperation.

Human rights is now enshrined in the ASEAN Charter.

We established an ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights. And we are heartened to observe that the Commission continues to progress.

We expect an ASEAN Human Rights Declaration this year.

And the recently established ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children will soon be fully operational.

As human rights values and democracy continue to consolidate within ASEAN, so is the case within individual ASEAN countries.

Because we continue to encourage one another to make progress.

We are thus heartened to observe recent developments in Myanmar, the important steps it takes toward democracy.

Indonesia stands ready to support Myanmar in this process. To make the transition irreversible.

Beyond our immediate region, we also aim to contribute.

For instance, we initiated the annual Bali Democracy Forum: an inclusive forum to promote homegrown democracy in the Asia-Pacific.

The Fourth Bali Democracy Forum last December focused on the theme, "Enhancing Democratic Participation in a Changing World: Responding to Democratic Voices."

A topic that is of particular relevance today.

The Fifth Bali Democracy Forum will be held in November this year, and I wish to invite all Delegates to participate in the Forum.

Moreover, as the country with the largest Muslim population, Indonesia has also worked hard for the establishment of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Indonesia was honored to host the first session of the Commission in Jakarta last week.

This independent body will serve to advance human rights in OIC Member States. It will thus accentuate the compatibility of Islam with human rights and democracy.

Madam President
Distinguished Delegates,

All of these achievements are not without challenges.
And I believe one of the main challenges is how to make the progress irreversible.

Especially in today's context, when historical transformation is taking place in full speed.

The political transformation in the Middle East and North Africa is a stark reminder that Governments must be accountable to their peoples.

We are thus gravely concern with the ongoing violence in Syria, with the heavy toll on civilian population.

That in a time of crisis, the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of affected populations is imperative.

And that a credible and inclusive domestic political process must always be part of the solution.

This is, nevertheless, just the beginning of the process. Like what Indonesia faced a decade ago, we need to make sure that the path towards democracy is sustainable.

This is where the Human Rights Council can make a significant contribution.

To help ensure that a country's transition runs smoothly.

That human rights are respected throughout the process. That the transition strengthens the national human rights machinery. That it leads to sustainable democracy. And that it strengthens national unity and integrity.

Allow me to share some thoughts towards this direction.

First, for democracy to be sustained, it must deliver.

And for democracy to deliver, it must flourish together with development.

It must produce conditions conducive for a nation to progress.

It must bring about peace, and promote moderation and tolerance.

It must serve the people's welfare, and enable them to enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights.

So that democracy prevails in the years to come.

Second, that the Human Rights Council should approach specific human rights situations with a holistic, long-term outlook.

We welcome the Council's effort to take actions in addressing human rights and humanitarian crises.

At the same time, the needs of the country in the long run, in the aftermath of the crisis, also warrant serious consideration.

The Human Rights Council must therefore give high priority to technical assistance and advisory services to Member States. To help them build their capacities based on their actual needs.

So that they can continue to mainstream human rights values and principles in the years to come.

Third, there are no fixed formulas that fit all situations.

In addressing particular situations, the Council must take an approach that fits the specific circumstances faced. And that a particular approach may need to be adjusted in the face of new developments.

For instance, in the face of the steps taken towards democracy in Myanmar. And of encouraging developments in Sri Lanka, although some challenges remain.

The Council needs to ensure that its approach will indeed encourage further progress. Dialogue, engagement, and cooperation are key.

And finally, there is an urgent need to develop a strong culture of prevention. Nationally, regionally, and globally.

A culture that prevents abuses from being perpetrated in the first place. A culture that is nurtured through international norms setting as well as homegrown national processes.

We therefore welcome encouraging developments in the area of norms setting, including the recent adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child related to individual communications.

We also support the ongoing process of strengthening the treaty bodies as well as the special procedures.

But efforts at norms setting will only be effective if there is adequate capacity at the national level to carry them out. And if there is strong support and involvement of civil society.

Again, this reflects the importance of capacity building. And the strengthening of democratic institutions and human rights machinery at the national and regional level.

Madam President,
Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me to also share with you some recent developments with regard to our effort to further mainstream human rights into our system of governance.

Last year we ratified the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We have thus ratified seven out of nine international human rights instruments.

This year we expect to make significant progress in the ratification process of some important instruments.

These include the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

We have also adopted an ambitious 3rd National Action Plan on Human Rights for the period of 2011 – 2014.

And as no country has a perfect human rights record, we admit that we need to do more.

Indeed, the promotion and protection of human rights is a continuing process. We must keep improving and adjusting to new realities and emerging challenges.

We therefore welcome the Universal Periodic Review as a way of evaluating our efforts.

Thus, for the second UPR cycle starting this May, we have submitted our national report, the product of collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, including our vibrant civil society.

We look forward to having a fruitful dialogue with the Council through this mechanism.

Madam President,
Distinguished Delegates,

All these efforts reflect Indonesia' s commitment to the pursuit of human rights and democracy.

A commitment that is total and absolute, despite of all the challenges that may be facing us.

Thank you.