Statement of Egypt
before the General Debate of the Third Committee on
Agenda Item 68: “Right of Peoples to Self-determination”

5 November 2013

Mr. Chairman,

The right of peoples to self-determination is a fundamental right that is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Article 1 of the Charter states clearly that the purpose of the United Nations is to "develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples". Similarly, the right of all peoples to self-determination is reaffirmed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The right to self-determination is an essential right for the promotion and the protection of all human rights for all peoples without exception. It represents the inherent right of peoples to choose their political, economic and social systems that are best suited to meet their needs and priorities, taking into consideration their cultures and their specific circumstances.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite all efforts exerted by the United Nations and its different organs to end decolonization, it remains incomplete. After almost seven decades since the establishment of the United Nations, and despite hundreds of reports and resolutions adopted by different United Nations organs, the people of Palestine have not yet enjoyed their right to self-determination. This continued failure to provide the basic human right of self-determination to the people of Palestine tarnishes the credibility of the human rights' agenda of the organization. We remind the international community that it has a moral and legal responsibility to end foreign occupation in Palestine.

We welcome the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation on human rights in the Palestinian territories. We concur with his opinion that the unlawful annexation and demographic manipulations in East Jerusalem have created fundamental threats to the Palestinian right of self-determination. We support his proposal that the International Committee of the Red Cross convenes an international conference to draft a convention for occupations that surpass five years or that a commission of inquiry composed of relevant international law experts examines the issues related to prolonged occupation.

We also welcome the resumption of negotiations within the Middle East peace process, based on the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace and the Arab Peace Initiative. We stress the importance of the conclusion of this negotiating process, that started more than twenty years ago, in order to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.
Mr. Chairman,

As the universal organization that champions issues of peace, security, development and human rights, the United Nations has a primary responsibility to ensure the full and unconditional realization of the right to self-determination, and the full enjoyment of all peoples of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular for the Palestinian people and other populations who are under foreign occupation.

Thank you.