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**STATEMENT
BY**

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**ON
"THE REPORT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL"**

**THIRD COMMITTEE
UNITED NATIONS
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Chairperson,

My delegation wishes to thank the President of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Ambassador Doru Romulus Costea, for his statement in the presentation of the Council's Report.

The Human Rights Council is an outcome of the World Summit Outcome in 2005, which envisioned a Human Rights Council responsible for promoting universal respect for the promotion and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. My delegation envisages that the work of the Council will be informed by this important principle of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA).

South Africa has been a member of the newly created Human Rights Council since its inception in 2006, and we have pledged to advocate for a development agenda as underlined by the VDPA and the Programme of Action of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. We believe that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment should be a priority for the international community, in order to ensure universal access to all human rights, that is, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

Chairperson,

In accordance with the mandate of General Assembly Resolution 60/251 of June 2006, the Human Rights Council finalized the establishment of its institutional mechanisms within the stipulated one year to enable it to effectively engage the international human rights agenda. The building of its structural framework was by no means an easy task, involving extensive and complex consultations by Member States and other stakeholders. To this end, the Institution Building Package, together with the Code of Conduct, as contained in HRC Resolution 5/21, was approved by the Council on 18 June 2007. The Council, in accordance with the mandate of the General Assembly, and within its own purview, has continued to adopt modalities and guidelines for the relevant mechanisms in order to complete its architecture. We are pleased to note that progress has been made in this regard. We fully support the agreement attained on the Institution Building Package by the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Chairperson,

Resolution 60/251 ushered in a new and more cooperative way of working within the UN human rights system. It instructed that the Council's work should be characterised by universality, impartiality and objectivity, with its methods of work aimed at abolishing selectivity and lessening politicization, and with a view to providing technical assistance and capacity building to States where needed. As Member States we have committed ourselves to ensure that the promotion and protection of human rights is based on the principles of constructive international dialogue and cooperation, with the objective of strengthening the capacity of Member States to comply with their human rights obligations. The Council's recently adopted Universal Periodic Review Mechanism (UPRM) whose objectives are the improvement of human rights on the ground and the fulfilment of a State's human rights obligations and commitments provides such a possibility.

The UPR will be universally applicable and will subject all UN Member States to a periodic review. We view the UPR as a significant instrument to reduce the selectivity and politicisation that characterised its predecessor, the Commission on Human Rights. Thus, it is my delegation's considered view that country mandates which are used as a political tool do not enhance the observation of human rights in the country concerned, and should therefore be terminated.

South Africa calls upon Member States to apply the letter and spirit of GA Resolution 60/251 in operationalising the UPRM. We should all commit to working within the context of the UPR, through cooperation and interactive dialogue, with the full involvement of the country concerned and with consideration given to its capacity-building needs. The outcome of the UPR process will

only be successful if the necessary political will is demonstrated by Member States in the application of the UPR, and the implementation of its outcome. We agree with the view that the credibility of the Council is closely linked to the success of the final outcome of the UPR process.

South Africa will continue to work with our partners in the promotion of human rights in a manner that is based on the principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue, with the objective of strengthening the capacity of Member States to comply with their human rights obligations.

I thank you.