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**STATEMENT
BY**

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THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC
OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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

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Chairperson,

My delegation wishes to convey its appreciation to the President of the Human Rights Council, Madame Laura Dupuy Lassere for her comprehensive and insightful report, serving to highlight the exponential growth in both the number and complexity of human rights issues dealt with by the Human Rights Council.

The scope and breadth of the work undertaken by the Human Rights Council during the last cycle as outlined in its report to the Third Committee at this 67th Session of the General Assembly in New York, underscores the increasing relevance and centrality of the Human Rights Council working with Member States of the United Nations to strengthen the international human rights machinery.

In particular, the requisite funding for new mandates is an area that needs attention, especially when viewed in the context of shrinking resources. Therefore, we welcome as a positive development the presentation of Programme 20 by the High Commissioner to Member States in the Human Rights Council. This represents the first occasion where the Strategic Plan of the Office of the High Commissioner for the biennium was formally presented to Member States and observers who were invited to present their views and to engage on the Programme.

My delegation would encourage the continuation of open, transparent and inclusive dialogue between the Office of the High Commissioner, Member States and other relevant human rights actors towards building mutual trust and confidence among all relevant stakeholders.

Chairperson,

The challenges posed by extreme poverty require a global response. Therefore my delegation welcomes the adoption of the guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights during the twenty-first session. South Africa, had recommended a comprehensive and inclusive approach through the mechanism of regional conferences to engage on the development of the guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights. However, we will continue to support the mandate of the Independent Expert, which has already started working with the University of the Western Cape and look forward to continued collaboration in this regard.

My delegation welcomes the adoption of an inaugural resolution 21/19 on the promotion and protection of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. This is an important resolution and important step forward in recognising the human rights of peasants who suffer disproportionately from poverty, underdevelopment and hunger, particularly in developing countries.

My delegation recognises the ongoing challenges on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination. In this respect, we welcome the valuable work of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group to consider the possibility of elaborating an international regulatory framework on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of the activities of private military and security companies. We welcome the adoption of HRC resolution 21/29 by consensus and support the conclusions and recommendations requesting the Chairperson of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group to present the report of the Working Group to the Human Rights Council at its twenty-second session.

My delegation notes that the expanding global reach and influence of transnational corporations and other business enterprises has placed these entities in the same space as governments. However, the intersection with human rights has created a need in terms of

the responsibilities of these entities in the promotion, protection and fulfillment of human rights. South Africa has noted the development of guiding principles, however, we believe that given the challenges together with the resources of business, a voluntary approach is highly insufficient, South Africa's position supported a legally-binding instrument with enforcement.

South Africa as host country for the World Conference against Racism has prioritised the need to intensify global efforts to combat the scourges of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance through the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Undoubtedly, global developments in this area underscore the systemic and pervasive nature of the challenge and the resurgence of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance manifested in all parts of the world. In this regard, South Africa welcomes the adoption of resolution 21/33 from rhetoric to reality: a global call for concrete action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. My delegation also welcomes and acknowledges the work of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, including the Programme of Action for the Decade for People of African Descent pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/144.

South Africa presented its second Universal Periodic Review report on 31 May 2012 which was formally adopted by the Human Rights Council during its 21st Session. To this end, my delegation expresses gratitude and appreciation to members of the Working Group as well as Member States for their insights and recommendations on how to improve South Africa's compliance on human rights.

Chairperson,

Since the establishment of constitutional democracy in South Africa, the policies of the South African Government have been underpinned by fundamental human rights principles, values and freedoms articulated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These are premised among others on the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality, equity, the advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms, non-racialism and non-sexism.

Our engagement with the international human rights systems is founded on these core values.

Our constitution as the supreme law of our country resonates with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is modeled on many of the core human rights provisions provided for in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which we have ratified. My delegation therefore is pleased to announce a recent Cabinet decision approving South Africa's accession to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The recommendation has been tabled in Parliament for South Africa's ratification to this important international instrument in line with Section 231 (2) of our Constitution.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to assure the President of the Human Rights Council of our continued support for the valuable work undertaken by her Office and for her leadership in support of the effective execution of her mandate.

I thank you.