



STATEMENT

BY

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UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN VIENNA**

**AT THE 31st SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON CRIME PREVENTION AND
CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

AGENDA ITEM 3: GENERAL DEBATE

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Chairperson,

I congratulate you as Chair of the 31st Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. I also congratulate other Members of the Bureau on their election and express our sincere appreciation to the Secretariat for their efforts in preparing for this session.

South Africa associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the African Group and Group of 77 and China, respectively.

Chairperson,

South Africa welcomes the convening of the 31st session under the theme “***Strengthening the use of digital evidence in criminal justice and countering cybercrime, including the abuse and exploitation of minors in illegal activities with the use of the Internet***”.

The theme is timely as it highlights the complexity of the problem of abuse and exploitation of minors through cybercrime as exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic while also providing Member States with the platform to exchange best practices to curb this scourge. This meeting also coincides with South Africa hosting the 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour in Durban, South Africa. We are optimistic that the envisaged international instrument on cybercrime as mandated by General Assembly Resolution 74/247 will put in place sufficient measures in protecting the well-being of minors from online sexual exploitation.

Equally, my delegation is positive that the divergent national approaches with regard to evidentiary rules, conditions, safeguards and investigative powers for the collection and use of electronic evidence in criminal prosecution shall also be addressed by the envisaged UN based international instrument on cybercrime. It is hoped that this will expedite the process of investigation, prosecution, conviction and sentencing of perpetrators of sexual abuse and exploitation of minors.

Chairperson,

At national level, my Government already have in place some laws that guide our fight against this scourge like the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act, the Children's Act and Protection from Harassment Act, in addition to being a signatory to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. These pieces of legislation are consistent with our Constitutional obligation aimed at the protection and well-being of the child including protection of children against cyber bullying which includes sexual, emotional, physical and verbal bullying.

Remedies to victims and survivors of abuse and exploitation includes compensation and, where appropriate, protection orders are granted by courts with the understanding that the perpetrator is rehabilitated through the various programmes that the Department of Correctional Services has put in place.

Chairperson,

One of the National Priorities for which my Government and Delegation requests the support of the international community is in the fight against the illicit poaching and trafficking in wildlife and endangered species such as rhinos and pangolins as well as other species of wild fauna and flora. Equally, South Africa encourages Member States to intensify the fight against illegal mining and illicit trafficking in precious metals as well as financial flows as a common and shared responsibility for all.

I conclude Chairperson by inviting all member states and interested stakeholders to the launch of the UNODC Toolkit on the Nelson Mandela Rules which encompasses practice-oriented guidance material for prison and criminal justice practitioners, policy-makers and legislators. The launch is scheduled for 18 July 2022 during the Nelson Mandela International Day and further details would be shared accordingly.

I thank you.