



**DRAFT STATEMENT**

**BY**

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**HONOURABLE MINISTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND  
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**AT THE 32<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON CRIME PREVENTION AND  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

**AGENDA ITEM 3: GENERAL DEBATE**

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**Check against delivery**

**Chairperson,**

On behalf of the Government and the people of South Africa, I take this opportunity to congratulate you, a fellow African country on your election to preside over this important Conference and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support. We also extend our appreciation to the Bureau for the excellent preparations for the meeting.

At the onset, my delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the African Group and Group of 77, respectively.

**Chairperson,**

South Africa welcomes the timely deliberations of the thematic discussions under the theme ***“Enhancing the functioning of the criminal justice system to ensure access to justice and to realize a safe and secure society”*** during the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ).

Enhancing the functioning of the criminal justice system to ensure access to justice and to realize a safe and secure society is central to the administration of justice and informs South Africa's approach to develop and implement transformative solutions and address systemic barriers to access to justice. One of the most critical barriers to access is affordability. We recognize that legal aid is a key element for access to justice especially for indigent and vulnerable people. This meeting provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the UN Principles and Guidelines for Access to Legal Aid in the Criminal Justice System, and to exchange views on best practices and challenges in enhancing the functioning of the criminal justice system. .

We are therefore pleased to announce that South Africa has partnered with key Justice Sector Stakeholders including the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) to achieve the objectives of SDG 16 Target 16.3 of promoting the rule of law at national and international levels and ensuring access to justice for all.

**Chairperson,**

My delegation supports the programme of work for this Session which allows Member States to deliberate on important matters such as the illicit trafficking in precious metals, the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes and seek new and innovative ways to enhance international cooperation in the fight against this scourge as a common and shared responsibility for all UN Member States.

**Chairperson,**

South Africa is encouraged by the work done by the distinguished Ambassador Foauzia Mebarki of Algeria in facilitating the negotiations of a UN based legally binding instrument on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes through the Ad Hoc Committee. We call upon Member States to work towards a consensus-based and balanced instrument that respects internet freedoms and fundamental human rights and enjoys near universal ratification similar to that of the UNCAC and the UNTOC. We further take this opportunity to thank all the co-facilitators of the working groups in fostering consensus amongst Member States and guiding the work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

**Chairperson,**

Environmental crimes continue to plague our nation, region, and continent at large. As a country, we have doubled our efforts in the fight against illegal mining and trafficking of precious metals, poaching in rhino horns and other species including fauna and flora. From 2020 until 2023, statistics show 3073 environmental crime cases where the accused were convicted, with a conviction rate of 96.73%.

I am pleased to inform delegations that a special focus is placed on the prosecution of rhino and related matters in order to curb this growing transnational phenomenon. The enhanced focus resulted in a significant increase in the conviction rate for such cases.

We express our appreciation to the Regional Office of the UNODC in facilitating regional cooperation and providing technical assistance to law enforcement officers in fighting this crime. .

**Chairperson,**

We would also like to recognise the commendable work of the Group of Friends of the Nelson Mandela Rules for ensuring their practical application in prison settings as evidenced by the Bangkok and Tokyo Rules, respectively. We look forward to the Meeting of the Group of Friends of the Nelson Mandela Rules under the theme “*A Forgotten Population: The Treatment of Prisoners in Challenging Times*” taking place today.

In conclusion **Chairperson**, allow me to express on behalf of the South African delegation, our sincere appreciation to the UNODC Secretariat for beginning the review process of the UNTOC. In this regard, South Africa reiterates its call for sufficient, predictable, and assured funding of the Review Mechanism to be able to deliver on its mandate.

**I thank you**