



58th Session of the Human Rights Council,

South Africa's Statement for the High-Level Segment

Geneva

Your Excellency, Volker Turk, High Commissioner for Human Rights,
Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Distinguished delegates,
Mr President,

It is a great pleasure to address this high-level segment of the 58th Session of the Human Rights Council. On behalf of the government and people of the Republic of South Africa, I extend our warmest greetings.

Last week, South Africa hosted the First Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the G20 to concretise our work programme during our Presidency.

The significance of South Africa's G20 Presidency is that, for the first time, the G20 Summit is being hosted on the African continent. South Africa has chosen the theme of *"Solidarity, Equality and Sustainable Development"*, to deepen international cooperation and bolster global partnerships.

We view our Presidency of the G20 as an opportunity to rebuild trust, reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism in addressing the multiple crises facing the world today.

South Africa intends to use its G20 Presidency to action the Pact of the Future, which World Leaders adopted at UNGA79 last September 2024, to forge global consensus and make progress in realising our global priorities, including the SDGs framework, to ensure the full equal and meaningful enjoyment of human rights by all.

Mr President,

The theme and focus of our G20 Presidency finds expression in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which inspired South Africa's 1955 Freedom Charter, a visionary document that informed the struggle for a united, non-racial, non-sexist, and democratic society.

The provisions of the Freedom Charter, whose 70th anniversary we celebrate this year, are embedded in our country's progressive democratic constitution which is renowned

the world over. The letter and the spirit of the Freedom Charter continues to inspire South Africa's participation and engagement with the Human Rights Council. We remain committed to the democratic socio-economic transformation agenda of our country to reverse the legacy of colonial and apartheid dispossession, discrimination and marginalisation.

As the High Commissioner recently stated, "Redressing South Africa's racially imbalanced land ownership is vital to addressing the historical injustices of the Apartheid era and fostering a more equitable future. The recently adopted (expropriation) law marks a critical step on this journey..."

Indeed, our constitution enjoins us to build a just, equitable South Africa in which all share in its prosperity! It is for this reason that we champion equality and non-discrimination in this Council, including efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance.

In this context, we urge this Council to leverage the 60th Anniversary of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination to conduct an honest assessment of the extent to which we have managed to contribute to attain our aspiration of a world free from these scourges, in order to intensify our efforts. Equally, in preparing to mark the 25th Anniversary next year of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and the Program of Action, the international community must double efforts to ensure the full implementation thereof through practical steps and actions.

Similarly, the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations, its Charter, and the 30th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action should serve as an inspiration to combat other forms of discrimination so that we can ensure the realisation of the "inherent dignity" and the "equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family".

Accordingly, South Africa reaffirms the importance of gender equality and women's rights and the important role that women play in ensuring peace, security, development, and prosperity of humanity.

Mr President,

As a beneficiary of international solidarity, today, South Africa is able to assume its rightful place in this Council as a responsible member of the human family. We remain steadfast in advancing international peace and security through inclusive dialogue and the peaceful political settlement of disputes, in the African continent and beyond.

Similarly, South Africa will never tire in standing-side-by-side in support of the peoples of Palestine and Western Sahara in their struggles for freedom and self-determination against occupation.

Mr President,

In today's world where might appears to trump right, it remains incumbent on the Council to promote an equitable multilateral system. South Africa will therefore continue to advocate for the reform of global governance institutions to protect human rights for all, everywhere.

As part of this process, the Council cannot afford to cherry-pick when and where we exercise our mandate. We must respond to all violations and abuses, regardless of who and where they are committed. In so doing, we will be making our contribution toward attaining the requisite balance between human rights, peace and security, and sustainable development.

Thank you.
