



**Statement on behalf of the Republic of South
Africa**

by

**Ms Mantsho Annastacia Motsepe
Principal State Law Adviser (International Law)**

**Before the Sixth Committee of the 77th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly**

**Agenda item 78
“Crimes Against Humanity”**

10 October 2022

Thank you, Chair, for giving my delegation the floor and for the opportunity to address you on this topic, the importance of which has resonated across the globe and has impacted numerous communities. We align ourselves with the Statement delivered on behalf of the African Group.

South Africa wishes once again to thank the International Law Commission for its work and efforts in preparing the draft articles on prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity.

South Africa understands first-hand from its very own history of Apartheid the ramifications of crimes against humanity, which have a negative ripple effect that is felt by many future generations. Thousands across the globe have had to experience and witness international crimes. We are now in the 21st century and crimes against humanity are still taking place; it is not only a crime of the past.

South Africa is of the view that we, as an international community, are long overdue in finalising a convention relating to crimes against humanity. We must not hesitate to give priority to its finalisation because, as we gather here for the 77th session, many around the world depend on us to act for them, to be a voice for them and to ensure the peaceful continuation of humanity and its respect thereof in all Member States.

Crimes against humanity is the only type of most serious international crimes that is not overseen by a convention despite the harrowing effects it leaves. South Africa is of the firm view that it does not serve humanity if we continue to delay discussions on the elaboration of a convention on crimes against humanity and strongly encourages Member States to move the draft articles forward. The elaboration of a convention would aid us not only in ensuring accountability and punishment of crimes against humanity already committed, but also in preventing them from being committed in the first place.

The draft articles are in line with Article 13, paragraph 1 (a) of the Charter of the United Nations which refers to the codification and progressive development of international law. The elaboration of a convention will also allow for greater international cooperation between member states as they engage in the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against humanity.

Whilst the text itself will require consideration and amendment, there are compelling reasons for the draft articles to move to the next stage where discussion on the content can take place. As such, South Africa has agreed to co-sponsor the draft resolution to

establish an Ad Hoc Committee to examine the draft articles on prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity.

South Africa eagerly looks forward to the Committee continuing in its work and its efforts in bringing member states towards consensus as to the content of the draft articles so to ensure the finalization of a convention.

We thank you.