



Madam Chair person ,

Allow me to thank you for affording us the floor on this important and complex topic. South Africa, as a strong proponent of a rules-based international society, has in previous statements expressed its support for the principle of universal jurisdiction for the most serious international crimes, as an instrument to combat impunity and to achieve justice. Like a number of other delegations, we have also noted the necessity to define clear rules for its definition and application in order to prevent it from being applied in a selective and political manner.

We therefore welcome the considerable progress that has been made in defining the concept and its scope, the conditions for application and the criteria for exercising jurisdiction, procedural aspects, the role of national judicial systems, and the important aspect of international assistance and cooperation, as reflected in the Informal Working Paper emanating from the discussion in the Working Group. The Paper furthermore provides clear lines for further discussion when it again takes up its work at the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, forming a solid foundation to build on. The reports by the Secretary-General are equally valuable in reflecting the positions of States and relevant international organisations.

Madam Chair,

With this important practical consideration in mind, South Africa has supported the initiative on the negotiation and adoption of the draft *Convention on International Cooperation and Prosecution of the Crime of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes*, which will hopefully proceed next year after Covid-19 interruption.

Madam Chair,

We have in previous statements noted that South African domestic legislation provides for extra-territorial jurisdiction over the crime of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, terrorist activities, piracy, civil aviation offences, nuclear-related offences and mercenary activities

In conclusion, Chair,

South Africa looks forward to participating in the deliberations of the Working Group. This work, as well as related initiatives to ensure international cooperation, are essential in closing the jurisdictional gaps which often allow the perpetrators of the most serious crimes to evade justice.

I thank you for your attention.