



**Statement**  
**on behalf of the Republic of South Africa**  
**by**  
**Amb X Mabhongo (DPR)**  
**Alternatively Thabo Molefe: Legal Adviser**  
**before the Sixth Committee of the**  
**74<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**Under Agenda Item 76**  
**“Criminal accountability of United Nations officials and**  
**experts on mission”**

**New York, 09 October 2019**

## **Chair**

At the outset, South Africa wishes to align itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group on this important matter before us.

## **Chair**

South Africa welcomes with great appreciation the reports issued by the Secretary-General on this important matter. We commend the countries that have shared their experiences and legal regimes which are enlightening and valuable in aiding all Member States in evaluating their own domestic legal frameworks for compliance with the requirements to close the 'jurisdictional gap'. South Africa acknowledges the extensive work required to produce the reports, and values the information communicated therein.

South Africa recognises the efforts made and continue to be made by the different UN bodies in attempting to come up with ways to protect our citizens from the criminal activities endured at the hands of some UN officials and experts on mission. It is our belief that once the process is completed there will be accountability from the officials and experts concerned and a sense of protection to the victims.

South Africa recognises the courageous actions of UN officials and experts on mission, as well as other officials within the UN system, for reporting the criminal activity and misconduct at the risk of personal prejudice. Such persons should be highly commended as their courageous actions are in line with the values of the United Nations. South Africa condemns any act of criminality against the vulnerable populations that depend on the United Nations officials and experts on mission for protection.

South Africa remains fully supportive of a rule-based regime created by a multilateral Convention to regulate the matter as a means to deter future recurrences, ensure accountability and ultimately protect the vulnerable populations who are supposed to

positively benefit from the deployment. South Africa continues to encourage the development of domestic legislation that vests local courts with the requisite jurisdiction over UN officials and experts on mission. The prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of serious crimes under domestic law serves as a means of closing the 'jurisdictional gap' pending the creation of an appropriate treaty.

South Africa notes the efforts referred to in the Secretary-General's report of 15 July wherein he informed that efforts are under way to standardize the delivery of induction training in conduct and discipline across all entities of the Secretariat and that measures are being taken to expand the vetting process to include personnel being recruited for all other entities of the Secretariat. We are confident that with continued training and vetting the scourge of violations of rights of the vulnerable populations will be curbed.

A joint effort is necessary for the success in resolving this issues. Both Member States in their national jurisdictions and the UN should work together for the realisation of accountability on the UN Officials and experts on missions as well as protection of the vulnerable populations who look up to us for protection. Let us close the gaps that continue to exist in Member States between prescriptive and enforcement jurisdiction.

In this spirit, we call on Member States to prioritise the closing of the jurisdictional gaps as a collective measure that is able to partly solve this complex problem. The continued strengthening of pre-deployment vetting procedures and training aimed at aligning the values and conduct of persons to those of the mission which they are being deployed to should be further strengthened as a means to act preventatively in ensuring that crimes committed by UN officials and experts on mission are reduced and addressed.

South Africa has already pledged, and continues to pledge, its support for combatting criminal activities by UN officials and experts on mission. We reassure the Sixth Committee of our support on its significant role on this matter.

**I thank you.**