

STATEMENT

BY

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ON BEHALF OF THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA

AT

THE 78TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

UNDER AGENDA ITEM 84

**“THE SCOPE AND APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF UNIVERSAL
JURISDICTION”**

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Thank you, Mr. Chair,

I wish to extend our appreciation to the Secretary General for his report on this agenda item.

Ethiopia aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the African Group and Non-Aligned Movement and I will make the following remark in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairperson,

Due to the progress of contemporary technology and the increasing interconnectedness of the world, the occurrence of transnational crimes has risen and become harder to manage. Additionally, the interests of nations and their citizens are now spread out across the globe. In order to tackle these issues, states must modify their law enforcement strategies and abilities, specifically in terms, investigating, and prosecuting crimes.

The criminal law of Ethiopia has long adopted the principle of universal jurisdiction for international crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, terrorism, money laundering, and all other crimes provided under treaties ratified by Ethiopia. Crimes such as illicit drug production and trafficking, human trafficking, the production of indecent images and publications, and other related activities are also within the principle of universal jurisdiction.

Mr. Chairperson,

Ethiopia believes that universal jurisdiction should only be used as a last resort and in a manner that supports the primary role of countries with direct links to the

specific incident. Only in the event that these institutions fail to take appropriate actions on the matter, should universal jurisdiction be considered as an option.

Furthermore, Ethiopia argues that the principle of universal jurisdiction should not be conflated with the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other similar ad hoc mechanisms, which only have jurisdiction based on specific agreements between states. Ethiopia is not a party to the Rome Statute and we do not support any approximation between the competence of the ICC over its members and universal jurisdiction.

The arbitrary and politically motivated application of the notion by some courts should not be allowed to undermine the principle of sovereignty of states. As is clearly stipulated by the African group, the utilization of the principle against heads of states and governments and leaders of African countries is deeply problematic and regrettable.

Finally, Mr. Chairperson, considering universal jurisdiction as one among the instruments in combating impunity, we call for a careful scrutiny of its scope and application in order to ensure its credibility and legitimacy. Technical aspects of its enforcement in terms of international legal cooperation also merit a thorough discussion.

Thank You.