



**SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL STATEMENT TO THE  
17<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT FORUM ON  
INDIGENOUS ISSUES (UNPFII),  
DELIVERED BY THE  
DELIVERED BY THE CHIEF DIRECTOR  
WILSON MAKGALANCHECHE OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND  
TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS  
19 APRIL 2018,  
NEW YORK**

Agenda Item 4: "Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Issues"

*Check against delivery*

Madame Chair,

Since the attainment of democracy in South Africa in 1994, the primary preoccupation of the Government has been the question of the delivery of essential services on a non-discriminatory basis to all South Africans. Paramount in this regard, are issues such as (i) land, land reform and redistribution, (ii) public healthcare services, (iii) quality education for all, (iv) adequate housing, (v) access to clean water and sanitation, (vi) the preservation of culture, language and heritage and also ensuring that all who live in South Africa are safe. The Government has made noteworthy strides in this regard, although much more remain to be done. The realisation of most of these objectives require huge resource mobilisation and the Government has prioritised partnerships in this regard. In essence, all these issues dovetail with the six mandated areas.

Madam chair,

The South African Government fully supports the decisions and recommendations of this Forum in relation to the attainment of the six mandated areas, which are critical for the realisation of the rights of indigenous peoples. South Africa is of the strong view that international cooperation and effective partnerships within the UN system including its specialised agencies, programmes and funds should be improved to compliment national efforts for the realisation of these imperative objectives.

Since the 16<sup>th</sup> session in 2017, South Africa has registered progress in the following areas;

- (a) **The promulgation of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act.** Parliament is currently in the process of amending this Act to integrate the Khoi San communities and their leadership.
- (b) **Access to higher education by all.** The Government has adopted a new policy to subsidize disadvantaged students at tertiary institutions. This latest subsidy has been expanded to cover a broad range of students from all backgrounds particularly from indigent families and in an inclusive manner.
- (c) **Land reform.** The Government of South Africa has realized that there can be no equitable economic benefit to the majority of South Africans without the

issue of land ownership being resolved. In this regard, the South African government has restored a sizeable amount of land to the previously disadvantaged groups including the Khoi and San communities. The issue of the expropriation of land without compensation within the Constitutional and legislative framework is also an issue that our Parliament is currently grappling with

- (d) **Preservation of culture and heritage.** The South African Constitution has made provision for the establishment of the Pan African Language Board (PanSALB) with the mandate to ensure the resuscitation of all languages as well as religious and cultural practices which were facing extinction during the Apartheid period. Much progress has been achieved in this regard. As part of these processes, the World Heritage Committee officially inscribed the Khomani Cultural Landscape onto the UNESCO Heritage List. The Government has also embarked on initiatives aimed at protecting and promoting linguistic human rights especially those spoken by the Khoi and San.

Notwithstanding the progress made, some of the challenges still to be addressed by the Government are in the following areas:

- (e) **Poverty, Unemployment and Inequality.** The President of the Republic of South Africa, in his 2018 State of the Nation Address introduced a comprehensive package of initiatives aimed at economic recovery and sustainable development to redress the imbalances of the balance.
- (f) Access to public health care services especially in rural areas and the communities of farm dwellers.

The Government through the Department of Traditional Affairs will look into possible collaboration and cooperation with other Governments in the region to advance the developmental agenda of indigenous people.

I thank you.