South Africa`s Statement during the 59th Session of the Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples` Rights: 21 October to 4 November 2016

Thank you Madam Chairperson

Commissioners, fellow State representatives of the African Union, representatives of National Human Rights Institution, Civil Society Organizations, young people in our midst, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we greet

Allow us Madam Chairperson to express our gratitude to the government and the people of the Islamic Republic of the Gambia for the warm welcome extended to our delegation since our arrival.

South Africa welcomes this opportunity as we mark the year 2016 the year of Human Rights with a particular focus on the rights of Women. Over the past few days we, as Member States, National Human Rights Institutions, and indeed NGOs, have been seized with various interventions on how best to improve the lives of our people and give a practical meaning and resonance to the African agenda 2063 and its 10yr Implementation Plan. The South African National Development Plan 2030 also seeks to advance these ideals.

The African aspirations espoused in Agenda 2063 require us all as Africans to commit our individual States and non-state actors to continue to seek African solutions to African challenges.

Madam Chair,

With the liberal and globally-competitive Constitution and domestic laws, South Africa continues to make significant progress in the advancement of the rights of women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, LGBTI persons and other marginalized groups. The recent resuscitation of the Sexual Offences Courts stands out as the commitment of our government to respond to any form of sexual violence in a victim-centric manner that upholds the survivors’ rights to dignity, privacy, access to information, and above all the right to equal protection and benefit of the law. Our home-grown Sexual Offences Courts Model is worth-
sharing and it continues to gain more recognition as the best practice model in the fight against sexual violence.

It remains our commitment to achieve gender parity in all sectors of human advancement. More progress has been noted in the area of women empowerment. Greater number of women continues to make inroads in political and economic participation. We have increased our women judges and magistrates and placed more women in senior management positions in the public service.

Our country stands committed in achieving impactful responsiveness and prevention against any form of violation of human rights enjoyed by our people.

South Africa has an established National Youth Development Agency situated at the Presidency. It task and purpose is to advance the National Youth Policy which seeks to redress the imbalances of the past whilst at the same time prioritizing the needs and aspirations of our young people. South Africa recognizes that young people are the backbone of development and sustainable economic growth.

Madam Chair,

The noble ambitions of our continent are achievable and my delegation is convinced that we can by 2020 silence the guns on our continent and achieve the “Africa we want”.

We thank the Commission and all experts and victims alike who shared their expertise and experiences during this historic 59th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples` Rights and ours is to double our efforts and rid our country and the continent of any form of abuse of human rights.

I thank you.