



Chairperson,

South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Morocco on behalf of the African Group and Austria on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Rule of Law.

My delegation would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his Report on this agenda item. We also recognize and appreciate the assistance provided by the UN to Member States in promoting the Rule of Law and ensuring respect for human rights at a national and regional level, particularly in Africa.

Chairperson,

Nearly three years into the pandemic, the virus has been profound, resulting in reports on the violation of the Rule of Law. COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching impact particularly for women and girls and has regressed global efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16, on peaceful and inclusive societies, justice that is accessible to all, and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The pandemic compelled countries to restrict movements of people in order to limit the spread of the virus. Justifiable, the fundamental freedoms of movement and assembly had to be restricted. The economic, social, and cultural rights, which include, the right to work, to education, to social security rights, to health, and decent work were severely affected. The principles of the rule of law became more pertinent in informing emergency responses of countries.

Inequity also persisted as the virus reproduces new variants. In this regard, we regret the efforts by some international actors who attributed the variants to certain countries, as these attributes have had negative impact on some countries including South Africa. However, despite these harmful actions, South Africa is still committed to upholding the principles of transparency and sharing of health information and data within the framework of multilateralism.

The pandemic has also aggravated the long-standing gender inequalities

Chairperson,

Guided by the Constitution, South Africa has consistently demonstrated the respect