

**SOUTH AFRICAN STATEMENT**

**THE RIGHT TO SOCIAL SECURITY INTERSESSIONAL PANEL:**

**THE HUMAN RIGHT TO SOCIAL SECURITY AND THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK**

**1 NOVEMBER 2021**

Chairperson,

Two years ago, this Council adopted the first ever resolution addressing issues of Social Security within the Human Rights system, thereby giving the Human Rights Council an opportunity to be more pro-active in an area of increased vulnerability for many in the world.

Hence this discussion is indeed timely as the pandemic has exposed and deepened existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. There is no doubt that the pandemic has turned our world, and the world of work upside down. It has derailed progress in reducing poverty and made achieving decent work for all even more of a challenge.

Chairperson,

Since the inception of democracy in South Africa in 1994, the social protection system has been transformed to meet the country’s constitutional mandate to promote social and economic justice and to address the legacy of its apartheid past. The social assistance programme is widely acknowledged to be the Government’s most successful poverty reduction programme, with far-reaching developmental impact.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are justiciable in South Africa and in the progressive realization of these rights, the social protection strategy includes social assistance complemented by the provision of other publicly funded services and social programmes such as compulsory primary education, health care, housing, basic services, public works, support for micro and small enterprises and a progressive taxation system that has an important redistributive function.

Chairperson,

The pandemic has unequivocally confirmed the value of social protection and that social protection systems globally have been grossly underfunded.

In all our efforts to “build back better” we should remain truthful to our aspirations imbedded in the 2030 Agenda. Fundamentally each goal is dependent on Social Protection, with Social Security falling under Goal 1 as a transversal means of implementation thereby anchoring the universality, indivisibility and interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights.

Response measures to repairing the damage caused by the pandemic need to be human-centred, gender responsive, resilient, inclusive, and sustainable which require greater international cooperation and solidarity, as many people still languish in poverty particularly in developing countries and cognisant of the changing world of work accelerated by the pandemic.

I thank you