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**STATEMENT BY**

**MR MAHLATSE MMINELE  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON**

**AGENDA ITEM 132: PROGRAMME BUDGET  
IMPLICATIONS OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C/69/L.55 ON  
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS NELSON  
MANDELA PRIZE AT THE FIRST PART OF THE RESUMED  
SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**24 March 2015  
New York**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak in my national capacity on Agenda Item 132: Programme Budget Implications of Draft Resolution A/C/69/L.55 on the establishment of the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize.

I would like to thank Mr. Johannes Huisman, Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division, for introducing the statement A/C/69/L.55 in accordance with Rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. The Group also wishes to thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for his introduction of the related report.

Mr. Chairman,

“The time for the healing of the wounds has come.  
The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come.  
The time to build is upon us.”

These were the words of the late Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela at his inaugural address after the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994. But the sentiments hold true for a global society that is just as divided and in need of hope seventy years after the foundation of the United Nations. And in his words, the time to build is upon us.

I would like to reiterate the appreciation of South Africa to all Member States for their solidarity and support for the life and memory of the late Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

The establishment of the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize is a recognition of his extraordinary legacy as a man who contributed to the promotion of the purposes and values of the United Nation.

In the words of Mr Mandela, “No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

South Africa firmly believes that leaders are not just born to the role. They are born, then made, by their own actions. It is the duty of humanity to support and empower such individuals in the quest to shape more leaders capable of addressing the key challenges that face us today. In this regard, we welcome the prize as a tribute and a public recognition for the humble contributions of individuals to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Mr Chairman,

I note with concern the delay in preparation for the first award of the prize, and support the Group of 77 and China in calling for the award ceremony to be scheduled on 18 July 2015. The timelines may be tight, but to quote our former President, “It always seem impossible until it’s done.”

In conclusion, I wish to assure you of the readiness of South Africa to engage constructively on the negotiations on this item in order to honour the legacy of the late Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman