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Statement Delivered
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During the General Debate in the Sixth Committee on
**Item 87 (The Scope and Application of the Principle of Universal
Jurisdiction)**

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Please check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,

As my delegation is taking the floor for the first time, allow me to join my colleagues in congratulating you and the members of the Bureau on your deserving election, and to commend you Mr. Chairman on the able way with which you have been conducting our deliberations thus far. Please be assured of my delegation's support and cooperation throughout the work of the Committee.

My delegation wishes to align itself with the statement delivered by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Gambia on behalf of the African Group. We also note the report of the Secretary General contained in document A/73/123 and commend those States who continue to submit comments for inclusion in the report.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation attaches great importance to this agenda item. The principle of universal jurisdiction is an integral part of International Law, which provides the realization of prospects of justice in places where it would otherwise be unimaginable. It unmistakably reflects the understanding that crimes that shock the conscience of humanity are a concern to all mankind. My delegation however wishes to reiterate that definition of this principle is not the issue before this committee. What we wish to impress on this committee is not to lose sight of the task it has been afforded, viz defining the scope and application of this principle, in the wake of its abuse.

Mr. Chairman,

It is vital that the scope and application of universal jurisdiction be clearly and unequivocally defined to avoid abuse of the principle, which could endanger international law and security. If applied appropriately, this principle is an effective way to combat impunity internationally and ensure protection of humanity's common values by waiving the habitual rules of classical international law and appealing to the criminal justice of States. My delegation however, repudiates the misuse and abuse of this principle, contrary to the sovereign equality and independence of States.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation therefore strongly emphasises the need to avoid arbitrary or selective application of the principle, in order to avoid such exploitation. We note with concern the well-known and repeated criticism of universal jurisdiction that it is open to misuse by States to usurp or contravene sovereignty of other States, and in particular, African States. We further highlight in this regard the various resolutions of the African Union summits expressing grave concerns about misuse of the principle of universal jurisdiction, and that its unfair application would lead to the violation of immunity of State leaders and officials. It is therefore the wish and hope of my delegation that the continued interrogation of this issue will lead to progress on the issue at hand and will lead this Committee back on track.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that the purpose of universal jurisdiction is to ensure that individuals who have committed grave

offences, such as war crimes and crimes against humanity, do not do so with impunity and are brought to justice. With this in mind, my delegation would like to reaffirm its commitment to contributing to this very important issue and in furthering dialogue in the hope of seeing consensus being reached with regard to the scope and application of this vital rule of International Law.

I THANK YOU