



República de Moçambique

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY JOAQUIM VERÍSSIMO,
DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE, CONSTITUTIONAL AND
RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE, TO
THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE 28TH SESSION OF THE
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
GENEVA, 4TH MARCH 2015**

Mr. President,

Mr. High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Honorable Ministers,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to address the Human Rights Council, on behalf of the delegation of Mozambique. This session takes place less than two months after the new President was sworn in in Mozambique and a new Cabinet was appointed, following the general and presidential elections that took place in our country on October 15th, 2014.

In this context, I was instructed by His Excellency Mr. Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, the new President of the Republic of Mozambique, to convey to this august Council his best wishes of successful deliberations and to reiterate the strong political commitment of the Republic of

Mozambique to the cause of promotion and protection of human rights.

We extend our warmest congratulations to the newly elected members of the Council, in particular those from our region in Africa and in the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP).

Mr. President,

This session convenes at a time when the Central and Northern parts of Mozambique have just been devastated by severe floods. One hundred and eighty people lost their lives; thousands were made homeless; public infra structures such as roads, bridges and power line towers were swept away, depriving millions of our countrymen of electricity and potable water supplies, for weeks.

Needless to say, natural disasters constitute a serious obstacle to our development. They undermine our efforts aiming at improving the enjoyment of human rights by our people.

To counter the negative effects of these disasters, our Government has put in place all means, at its disposal, to assist those affected by the natural disaster. Thanks to domestic and international solidarity, it has been possible to assist and mitigate the human suffering of those who have been affected. We wish to express our profound gratitude to the International Community for its support.

The floods that are occurring in Mozambique remind us of the importance we should attach to the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, due to open in Sendai –

Japan, in two weeks. We need to advocate a people-centered vision of disaster prevention and mitigation with the primary purpose of safeguarding human life, a fundamental human right from which all other rights derive.

Mr. President,

We have read with keen interest the report of the High Commissioner which we welcome. Mozambique wishes to express its support to the Six Thematic Priorities 2014-2017, as outlined in the report. We stand ready to cooperate for their successful implementation. We are however concerned that the Office has felt compelled to reduce the level of its activities, in the context of these priorities, due to budgetary constraints.

While cognizant of the efforts made to increase the regular budget of the Office of the High Commissioner, we are of the view that budget allocation to this Office should match the complexity of the mandate assigned to it. These are the times when human rights, worldwide, are facing unprecedented challenges. It is our considered position that human rights, as one of the most important pillars of the United Nations system, should deserve our utmost attention, including in budget allocation.

Adequate funding is necessary if we want the Office to operate with efficacy around the world, in particular, in matters related to cooperation with member states. In this connection, we express our appreciation to the Office for having undertaken a capacity building mission in our country in support of our National Commission for Human Rights.

Thanks to such cooperation, our National Commission was able, among other actions, to carry out the first systematic monitoring of places of detention under its mandate as the National Preventive Mechanism for the implementation of the Optional Protocol against Torture.

In the area of business and human rights, in the light of the UN Guiding Principles, I am happy to report that Mozambique has held workshops with the involvement of Civil Society, the business community and other stakeholders, as we strive to draft our national action plan, on the basis of those principles.

Mr. President,

Over the past months, West Africa has been affected by the terrible Ebola epidemic. We wish to express our solidarity with our sisters and brothers of the countries affected. We commend the efforts deployed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and His Office, which resulted in a study of the human rights dimension of EBOLA epidemic, in cooperation with the World Health Organization. The magnitude of Ebola epidemic and the death toll it has claimed so far require due attention. We recommend that the lessons and conclusions of the study be swiftly implemented in order to save lives, present and future.

Still in Africa, we look forward to the report of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic. Mozambique strongly encourages the transitional government and other stakeholders to persevere in their bid to bring the country back on track, with the support of the African Union and the International Community, at large.

Mr. President,

To conclude my remarks, my delegation pays tribute to the High Commissioner for Human Rights and his Office, to treaty bodies, special mandate holders and other mechanism, to the staff at the Headquarters and in the field, for their relentless efforts in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Mozambique will be undergoing her second cycle of the UPR exercise in 2016. We have put in motion the process that will lead to this review, following the road map that we have outlined. We look forward to continue working very closely with the distinguished members of this Council and the International Community at large as we endeavor in the promotion and protection of human rights.

I thank you, Mr. President!