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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE TO  
THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS  
IN GENEVA

13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Universal Periodic Review  
Consideration of the National Report of South Africa  
31 May 2012

*Statement by Ambassador Joaquim da Fonseca*

Thank you Madam President,

We thank the delegation of South Africa for a very sincere and frank report. Undoubtedly, South Africa possesses one of the most comprehensive legislative frameworks for the promotion, protection and fulfilment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, starting from the Constitution, which incorporates a Bill of Rights, and the other enabling legislations. Since the last review, many important steps have been taken to give effects to the human rights provisions contained in the Constitution and laws, including through the reconfiguration of government structure and the realignment of departmental mandates, as well as the design of targeted programmes. The cluster system adopted by South Africa is also crucial to ensure coherence of actions among various government institutions.

We note with sympathy the challenges faced by South Africa in its endeavours to deliver on its human rights commitments. Some of these challenges are historically rooted. The fulfilment of the right to education, of which many South Africans were deprived for many decades, is essential for the enjoyment of other rights. We appreciate the efforts and attention given to both elementary and higher education, which are progressively yielding results. We recommend that South Africa maintains its commitment to improve the quality of education to ensure the full enjoyment of the right to education.

Violence in South Africa also has a historical context. However, the level of gender based violence including domestic violence is reported to be quite high, with women often being in a more vulnerable situation. We recommend that the newly established Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities be empowered to coordinate actions among various government agencies to address the issue of gender based violence.

Thank you.