

**Mission Permanente de la
République du Cameroun
auprès des Nations Unies**



**Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Cameroon
to the United Nations**

**PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES ON PREVENTION
AND PUNISHMENT OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY**

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
DELIVERED BY CAMEROON**

NEW YORK, 19TH JANUARY 2026

Chair,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.
2. The African Group would like to thank the Bureau and the Office of Legal Affairs and the DGACM for the work done in preparation for this meeting.

Chair,

3. In its Resolution 79/122 of December 4, 2024, the General Assembly decided to convene a United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries, to meet at the United Nations Headquarters in 2028 and 2029, to elaborate and conclude a legally binding instrument on prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity.
4. The African Group welcomes this decision as it demonstrates our collective commitment to prevent and punish crimes against humanity, which are amongst the most serious crimes that affect the international community, deeply shock the conscience of humanity and endanger the stability, peace and cohesion of society.
5. The Group welcomes the holding of the current first session of the Preparatory Committee, which constitutes the starting point of a process that hopefully will lead to concrete and tangible results, with the elaboration and adoption of the convention as the ultimate goal.
6. It is expected that this meeting fosters the exchange of substantive views expressed during the past sessions of the Sixth Committee, in a constructive and open spirit, with a view to achieve the broadest possible consensus for the adoption of this Convention.

Chair,

7. The African Group recognises the fundamental importance of this process, and it is for that reason that it reiterates its readiness to constructively engage, in meaningful and substantive discussions to be held following a fair, inclusive and transparent process premised on the established principle of consensus. In this regard, the African Group would like to echo resolution 79/122 in stressing that the Conference should be undertaken in an open and transparent manner, with a view to promoting universal adherence. Equally important is the

necessity to ensure the widest possible and effective participation in the Conference as well as on all the major preparatory steps that will lead to the Conference.

8. As previously stated, while the draft articles adopted on second reading by the ILC may constitute a potential basis for our consideration on the subject, the legitimate concerns raised by many States, both individually and as part of the regional groups during the 78th, including its Resumed Sessions, the 79th, 80th of the General Assembly as well as the Preparatory Commissions should be given due consideration. This will give effect to the decision of the General Assembly, in its Resolution 79/122, that a summary document consisting of the draft articles and a compilation of the amendments that States will propose be transmitted to the Conference, thus clearly demonstrating that the said draft articles would not serve as the sole basis for the negotiations.
9. For the African Group, an inclusive process is a process reflective of the injustices of the past which are still a reality disguised differently in modernisation as reflected in the comments of the African Group and the individual African States made during the two Resumed Sessions of the Sixth Committee. A transparent process is a process where the concerns raised by the African group and all regions affected by the crimes against humanity are duly reflected. Such a process should also address contemporary forms of crime and threats.
10. The African Group recalls the negative impact of historical atrocities, unilateral coercive measures and international crimes especially, slavery, slave trade, colonialism, apartheid, racial segregation and subjugation, and the exploitation of resources and other heinous acts, associated with these crimes, that denied and violated the humanity of its victims as one of the highest forms of crimes against humankind.
11. To this day, we continue to experience the vestiges and consequences of, for instance the Transatlantic Slave Trade and racial discrimination, which continue to affect the continent and people of African descent. It is in this context that we continue to call for the admissions of responsibility for slavery and the slave trade as well as all other practices threatening the future and perpetuation of humankind and

their continuing consequences, with the moral authority and responsibility to lead global efforts in their prevention. We therefore reiterate our call for the inclusion of these crimes as crimes against humanity as the prohibition of these crimes is inalienable and imprescriptible. In the same way, it is crucial to recognize the violence and denial of human dignity that marked this period and establish a new legal framework for recognition and reparative justice.

12. Similarly, the fundamental legal concepts of historical importance to African Member States, such as the principle of territorial integrity, sovereign equality, and non-interference in the internal affairs of states enshrined in the UN Charter should be explicitly mentioned in the draft articles, given the horizontal nature of the articles. We also caution against the double standards and the selective approach to justice as they erode trust and confidence in the international legal order.

Chair,

13. The African Group reiterates its concerns regarding the ILC's approach regarding the review of, and reference to some provisions borrowed from other internationally binding instruments, in a manner inconsistent with their initial context or intention.
14. The African group highly values international cooperation in combating crimes against humanity. Such cooperation should be undertaken in accordance with the principle of complementarity and with applicable rules of international law relating to immunities. In this regard, we are of the view that priority should be given to national jurisdictions and to bilateral cooperation in the areas of mutual legal assistance like extradition.
15. The general obligations of States should be linked first to national laws and then to obligations freely entered into under the mechanisms provided for by international law to ensure that these obligations comply with the spirit and letter of international law. Further, the prohibition to engaging in acts constituting Crimes Against Humanity must be precise and formulated within the capacity of the State to punish.
16. An emphasis also ought to be placed on strengthening capacity building and fostering mutual legal assistance. This is about filling the

resources and capacity gaps and ensuring that implementation of the expected instrument will be accompanied by technical and institutional support for the benefit of the States that need it the most, including African States.

17. To conclude, the African Group shares the view that, to effectively combat impunity and blatant disregard for human rights, more efforts should be exerted in line with applicable international legal instruments. Considering this, the African Group remains ready to engage constructively during the current first session of the Preparatory Committee, subsequent steps and diplomatic conference itself, with the objective of developing an international instrument that is fair, balance and enjoys the widest possible support. While challenges remain, we believe that with broad ownership and consensus, a universal instrument on the prevention of crimes against humanity can be achieved.

I thank you for your kind attention.