

Statement

On behalf of the African Group

by

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Before the Sixth Committee

74<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has, once again, the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group. The African Group associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We take note of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/74/144.

I have the high honour to reiterate the great importance the African Group, made of 54 Member States of the United Nations, attaches to this agenda item "The Scope and Application of the Principle of Universal Jurisdiction". As you may recall, the abuse in the resort to universal jurisdiction, particularly over African officials, caused the African Group to request in February 2009 the inclusion of an additional item on the abuse of the principle of universal jurisdiction on the agenda of the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The African Group stated, in a memorandum annexed to the request for the inclusion of universal jurisdiction on the agenda of the 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly, that "The principle of universal jurisdiction is well established in international law", that "The African Union respects this principle, which is enshrined in article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act", but that it was concerned about the uncertain scope and application of the principle and the abuse of it.

As a result of the aforementioned request, this item was included in the agenda of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly in 2009, at the request of the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the African Group and was allocated to the Sixth Committee. At the 25th meeting, on 12 November 2009, the representative of Rwanda, on behalf of the Bureau, introduced a draft resolution entitled "The scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction" A/C.6/64/L.18. Universal jurisdiction has since been a subject of challenging discussions in the Sixth Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

The length of time we have intensely debated this topic, and the tiny steps we have collectively taken in ten years undermines the importance of addressing the “misuse” and “abuse” of the universality principle, which should be of concern not only for the African Member States but rather all Member States of the United Nations. For 10 years the Sixth

As evident in the adoption of resolution