

HRC 36th session

Item 6 – UPR Outcome of South Africa

Edmund Rice international Statement

Mr President,

South Africa has an alarming frequency of gender-based violence. Statistics show only a fifth of perpetrators face legal action following a reported rape, of whom only 4-8% face conviction. More than half of criminal cases collapse due to police incompetence – negligence which is unacceptable, yet avoidable. The reluctance of police to investigate criminal acts of domestic violence undermines the legal mechanisms intended to protect victims. We recommend the proper implementation of the Service Charter for Victims of Crime to guide police and legal services in performing their duties.

South African education is also a concern. Despite significant government investment, it has proved highly dysfunctional, characterised by high drop-out rates. Language barriers are central to the problem. Only 50% of students complete their full twelve years of schooling, while English, the language of instruction, is the mother tongue of less than 10% of the population. Increased resource allocation for infrastructure and the improving of teacher qualifications are also key to tackling these issues.

South Africa has also failed in its humanitarian responsibility to refugees. Despite accepting just 4% of applicants and facing a large backlog, the government has opted to shut down refugee centres. We recommend the government hire additional personnel and reopen refugee offices to resolve this issue, and we call upon the government to reconsider its xenophobic attitude to refugees.

Finally South Africa has continued to fail to meet the demand for housing. Mismanagement and inefficiency in the Reconstruction and Development Programme has undermined both the quality and quantity of housing. We urge the reform of administrative structures to address these issues.

Thank you