Madame President,

The South African delegation takes this opportunity to present the following comments relating to the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the right to food:

- The Government of South Africa extends its appreciation to the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Mr. Olivier de Schutte for visiting our country, sharing insights based on his vast experience and for the subsequent report produced in this regard.

- The Special Rapporteur was visiting South Africa for the first time and naturally it was inevitable that some inconsistencies and statistical inaccuracies in the report of the Special Rapporteur would be discernable. In this context, the Government of the Republic of South Africa decided to produce an Addendum, under cover of an official memorandum signed by Heads of three (03) Core Departments with the mandate to ensure food security in South Africa. This Addendum represents an official response by the Government of South Africa and should be read in tandem with the report of the Special Rapporteur.

- This short statement is complementary to the Memorandum already issued with the Addendum which documents will be circulated officially to all Member States.

- The South African Government has decided to continue its collaboration with the Special Rapporteur. It is believed that the initial contact with the Special Rapporteur occasioned by his visit to our country during July 2011 will continue to grow in depth and deeper understanding of the South African situation in due course.

- The South African democratic dispensation is fully committed to promoting and protecting human rights, human dignity and equality for all without discrimination. The leadership of the current government has been engaged in the struggle for the attainment of these core values of humanity. The perception that South Africans can undermine the very values that they so dearly cherish would be an irony. These values are not only important for South Africans themselves but are commonly shared in our region and broadly, on our continent. In this regard it should be noted that South Africa is a major source of procurement of adequate food and foodstuffs (particularly crop production) for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and far afield on the continent. The Government is working in collaboration with the Rome Institutions (UNFAO, WFP, IFAD) towards ensuring adequate food for the region especially during famine and drought. At a meeting of the SADC Council of Ministers held in Luanda week (02 March 2012), the SADC governments decided to provide a total of 8 073 tons of perishable and non-
perishable foodstuffs and other relief supplies to the people of Somalia as an act of solidarity and humanitarian support; and

- That the SADC region is currently engaged in several key regional initiatives such as economic integration, infrastructural development and lately, working jointly with UN FAO a regional programme on food security.

I thank you.