ZIMBABWE STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE AT THE 13TH SESSION OF THE EXPERT MECHANISM ON THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT: 21 APRIL 2026 (FIVE MINUTES)

Thank you, Chair,

My delegation welcomes the convening of this session, which is central to advancing the development aspirations of the Global South. We commend Ambassador Zamir Akram, Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the Right to Development, Ms Klentiana Mahmutaj, Chair of the Expert Mechanism, and Mr. Surya Deva, Special Rapporteur, for the dedicated work being undertaken within the framework of the Expert Mechanism to advance R2D.

Zimbabwe aligns itself with the statement delivered by Uganda on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and we share the following reflections in our national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

This year marks a significant milestone. As we commemorate the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development, we are reminded of a fundamental truth, that development is not a privilege. It is a right.

The Declaration affirms that every person is entitled to participate in, contribute, and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political development. It recognizes development as a powerful driver of dignity, opportunity and transformation. In this regard, the right to development must be upheld with the same commitment and urgency as all other human rights.

At its core, the Declaration establishes a clear balance. It places responsibility on states to create enabling conditions at the national level, while calling for enhanced international cooperation. This approach remains relevant today as it was 40 years ago.

For Zimbabwe, the right to development is a foundational precept which my Government consistently upholds. It is rooted in our history and reflected in policies that promote access to land, resources and economic opportunities.

In the exercise of our sovereignty over the country's mineral resources, the Government of Zimbabwe has taken deliberate steps to promote value addition and industrialization. This demonstrates our commitment to ensure that our resources generate jobs, build industries and create lasting value for our citizens. Our national vision of becoming an Upper Middle-Income Society by 2030, is therefore inseparable from the realization of the right to development.

Mr. Chair,

At the international level, we welcome the growing recognition of R2D in regional frameworks and global instruments. We also underscore its centrality in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Looking ahead, Zimbabwe underscores the importance of operationalising R2D. In this regard, my delegation recommends the continued leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement. We also support the call for the General Assembly to advance negotiations towards a legally-binding instrument on the right to development- the International Covenant on the Right to Development. This instrument would provide a stronger foundation for collective action and accountability.

Mr. Chair,

My delegation looks forwards to the convening of the high-level segment to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Declaration later this year. We, also, align with the proposal by NAM for the convening of a High-Level International Conference on the Right to Development.

These events should serve as a call to renew our commitments, and ensure the full realization of the right to development.

I thank you.