



SOUTH AFRICA

**STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
IN SUPPORT OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA
AT THE NINETY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

South Africa reaffirms its support for Venezuela and its representation within the OPCW. Venezuela held its Presidential elections on 20 May 2018, on the basis of its national laws governing such elections. These elections also took place in accordance with the Agreement of Electoral Guarantees that was signed by all political parties shortly before the elections. The elections were further overseen by Venezuela's National Electoral Council. It was on this basis that President Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa, congratulated President Maduro following his inauguration for a second term as President.

One of the founding values of South Africa's constitutional democracy is the respect for the rule of law. South Africa remains deeply concerned by what is a clear attempt, in Venezuela, to circumvent the country's constitutional legal mechanisms, which govern its elections.

Any grievances or disputes should be resolved in a peaceful manner through the proper mechanisms and processes provided for in the constitution of Venezuela and its electoral laws, without external influence. This is standard, and indeed best practice, in all democracies that subscribe to the rule of law.

South Africa echoes the statement made by the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, where he urged a de-escalation of tensions to prevent violence.

In view of the above, South Africa would not join those who oppose the credentials of the PR of Venezuela.

My delegation requests that this statement be adopted as an official document of the work of this Council, and that it be published on the website of the Organisation

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