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STATEMENT

BY

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AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

72ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**AT
THE SECURITY COUNCIL
ON
THE OPEN DEBATE IN CONNECTION WITH THE
AGENDA ITEM "WOMEN, PEACE AND
SECURITY"**

**NEW YORK
27 OCTOBER 2017**

Mr. President,

1. Namibia welcomes the Security Council's decision to once again discuss the issue of Women, Peace and Security as a standing agenda item. And we are encouraged by the overwhelming support shown by Member States as evidenced in the large number of participants.

Mr. President,

2. We would like to reiterate that Namibia, as the initiator of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, remains committed to its implementation and we look forward to a time when women's contributions to peace-processes are valued and respected equally. In Namibia, the implementation of Resolution 1325 falls within the National Gender Policy framework, which contains a cluster on **"Gender, Peace-Building, Conflict Resolution and Natural Disaster Management"**, with the overarching objective to **"Increase and strengthen women's participation in conflict resolution, promote women's contribution to peace-building, and involve women in natural disaster management"**. The reviewed gender policy (2010-2020) includes natural disaster Management, an emerging issue that resolution 1325 overlooked. The gender policy is complimented by other national policies aimed at mainstreaming gender, discuss placing women on par with men, including the affirmative action act, inheritance act, and the communal land act, among others.
3. These policies have ensured that Namibia has been deploying women to all peacekeeping missions, and to date has had one of the largest female police contingents at the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation (UNAMID) in Darfur, Sudan. We also had a women police contingent in Liberia. When one of the SADC countries Lesotho faced a political impasse last year, the SADC police contingent to that country was led by a Namibian woman who had previously served in Darfur. In addition, Namibia has seconded a woman to the Office of the AU Envoy on WPS. It is our belief that the significant presence of women peacekeepers in conflict and post-conflict areas has an added advantage of creating safer spaces for girls and women who have suffered sexual violence. Studies conducted by the UN on support of resolution 1325, have demonstrated that female soldiers often face different

cultural restrictions as their male counterparts, and are able to gain information from women and children. This ability to gain the trust of local populations should be considered a vital component of any peacekeeping operation

Mr. President,

4. The challenges to the implementation of Resolution 1325 are many, and include lack of awareness on the agenda, lack of political will compounded by entrenched biasis not to promote women to positions of power and lack of capacity building and financing for the agenda. Another challenge is simply cultural and traditional norms that serve to promote men to positions of power, while question the ability of women to lead, particularly in traditionally male fields such as police, defence and peacekeeping. Since these traditional norms are pushed by both women and men, we must encourage a culture in which both men and women believe it vital to support the rise to positions of leadership by women.
5. The inclusion of women in early warning, mediation and conflict resolution efforts are key to ensuring a successful peace and security agenda. Gender-specific provisions also need to be included in peace agreements. Much progress is still to be made in this area since in 2016, only half of peace agreements adopted contained gender-specific provisions.
6. We must also do more to prevent and condemn sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations. The role of peacekeepers is to protect civilians, not cause more harm or distress. In this regard, Namibia signed the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Compact during the high-level week in September, and we encourage others to do so.
7. Namibia encourages Member States to commit to nominating women for top level positions in international and regional peace and security organizations. At the African Union, the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, Mme. Bineta Diop has been raising this matter in many fora. We encourage other regional and subregional organizations to nominate Women, Peace and Security Envoys. We urge troop- and police-contributing countries to identify

and deploy female military experts in peacekeeping missions. Finally, we demand greater consideration of the women, peace and security agenda in the working procedures of the Security Council, both country-specific and thematic.

I thank you.