



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR NEVILLE GERTZE ON AGENDA ITEM 29: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN, THIRD COMMITTEE

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(Check Against Delivery)

Mr. Chairperson

Namibia associates itself with the statements delivered by Ecuador, on behalf of G77 and China, Egypt on behalf of the African Group and South Africa on behalf of SADC.

Mr. Chairperson

Violence against women is a universal and global matter of serious concern. This scourge occurs at all levels of society with no relation to economic or social status. Women are victimized in multiple ways, whether through physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or by threats to their children, their properties or economic wellbeing. There are many causes of gender-based violence, chief among them are harmful gender stereotypes, and economic dependency. While Namibia has successfully made several legislative changes to benefit women, societal norms do continue to present a barrier which must be addressed in both the long and short term.

Chairperson,

To address violence against women, the Government of Namibia, through the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare has prioritized campaigns against gender-based violence, in a push to sensitize our communities on the causes and results of violence against women. The Ministry has been doing advocacy work that seeks to empower women and girls, to identify abusive situations, and ways to address them, including by launching a zero tolerance media campaign on gender based violence. The annual 16 days Activism Against Gender Based Violence (GBV) campaign, is another outreach program, where the government in collaborations with civil society stretches a country-wide awareness campaign, by hosting events aimed at creating awareness of the public to gender based violence, and calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and children.

The Namibian judiciary has strengthened the prosecution process by imposing stiffer sentences for gender-based violence offenders. Victims are being supported and assisted through a multi-sectoral intervention process, including by law enforcement and prosecutors. However, the challenge remains that women do not come forward to report cases of violence perpetrated against them for a number of reasons.

With the launching of the fifth National Development Plan (NDP5), Namibia commits to increase financial and human capacity of service providers for integrated prevention, protection and response services for victims of gender based violence.

Chairperson,

Economic empowerment of women is imperative to mitigate such violence. To this end, the Government of Namibia has introduced a National Policy on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise in Namibia (2016-2021) which emphasises economic empowerment for women and continues to improve the business environment in the formal and informal sectors. There are also Income Generating Activities (IGAs) programmes, which provide material and equipment grants predominantly to women.

In implementing the provision of the supreme law, Namibia has enacted laws and developed other policies and strategies that guarantees that, women do not only enter the workforce without discrimination, but that provisions are made to ensure equal benefits for them, and that transformational and structural changes are made in that regard.

Achieving decent work and productive employment for women, and promoting women's entrepreneurship is one of our policy priorities. This is complemented by our zeal and the effort employed to enhance and ensure women's access to, ownership of, and control over productive resources and assets. Similarly, Namibia introduced and implemented Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) which is a pre-request of responding to the practical and strategic needs of women and men, girls and boys.

In Namibia, economic empowerment also relates to poverty eradication, which the Government has made the highest priority by declaring that “no one should feel left out.” The empowerment of rural and previously marginalized women and their economic advancement is thus high on the agenda. Many of these women work in the informal economy as well as in the agriculture sector, and as such, the Government has several initiatives in place, aimed at supporting rural women’s economic opportunities, including by providing support for setting up small-scale businesses, subsidised farming equipment and access to banking sectors.

Chairperson,

Namibia is committed to the full to implementation of national, regional and international instruments aimed at gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, through a multi-sectoral approach, and a well-coordinated partnership with all relevant stakeholders. We call on all partners to do the same, particularly if we are to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and achieve the goals and targets set in the 2030 Agenda

I thank you,