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STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. NEVILLE GERTZE

AMBASSADOR & PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

BEFORE

**THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE
73TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

ON

AGENDA ITEM 29: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

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NEW YORK
(Check Against Delivery)

Mr. Chairperson

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

Mr. Chairperson

Namibia is fully committed to the advancement of women and to ensuring gender equality and equity. The exclusion of women from certain spheres of life wastes valuable skills and expertise that could contribute meaningfully to sustainable socio-economic development.

The empowerment and advancement of women is, at its core, about human rights and the application of natural justice. The Namibian Constitution incorporates these values into our national laws, policies and frameworks. However, we recognize that we must do more than simply enact legislation. We must develop the necessary political to drive the implementation of the legal framework that has been set in place. We must ensure buy –in, in order to complete the mainstreaming of these gender sensitive policies. To this end, the ruling party in Namibia has demonstrated its political will through the 50/50 rule. Opposition parties are now following suit. We are proud to say that there is now an equal representation of men and women in Parliament, our nation’s highest legislative body.

Last month, the National Council of Namibia hosted the fifth session of the Rural Women’s Parliament under the theme *‘Positioning Rural Women for Economic Inclusion and Prosperity’*. This initiative aimed to hone knowledge and foster understanding of parliamentary processes by women at grassroots level, thereby creating a platform for discourse and empowering rural women & citizens.

In June this year, the African Gender Forum, within the context of the Gender is My Agenda (GIMAC) Campaign recognized Namibia as a top performing country in Africa.

Mr. Chairperson,

In 2020, it will have been two decades since Namibia spearheaded the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. In the years since, much has been done to promote the role of women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Namibia has increased representation of women in the peace and security sector, making us one of the countries in the region with the highest level of women representation. Female representation is currently at 23% in the defence forces, 38% in the police force and 44% in correctional services.

Mr. Chairperson,

In Southern Africa, 43% of households are headed by a woman. As such, when we speak of advancement, it is intertwined with the economic advancement of women.

Against that background, Namibia welcomed the launch of the Accelerating Women Owned Micro-Enterprises Initiative in July 2018, which falls under the auspices of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, and is funded by UN Women and the De Beers Group. This initiative will build on and complement the entrepreneurship programme of the Ministry to offer skills in structured business thereby empowering women owned businesses.

Mr. Chairperson,

While Namibia notes many positive steps in the advancement of women and gender equality, the scourge of violence against women in particular, gender-based violence, still plagues Namibia. This type of violence is often rooted in societal norms and ideologies, which unfortunately cannot simply be legislated away. We recognize the need to address the challenges brought about by our patriarchal system, the longstanding impact of our colonial heritage and war, by being inclusive in educating men and women, girls and boys, on the changing roles that women and girls play today.

If we do not address systemic discrimination, we will perpetuate a cycle of patriarchy that inhibits the inclusion of women in society and undermines general human rights. Breaking patriarchal structures will lead to the increase of women's voices and influence in society and will ensure that no one is left behind.

I thank you.