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STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. NEVILLE GERTZE

AMBASSADOR & PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

BEFORE

**THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE
74TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

ON

AGENDA ITEM 26: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

7 OCTOBER 2019

NEW YORK
(Check Against Delivery)

Mr. Chair,

Namibia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by XXX on behalf of SADC, the statement by Zambia on behalf of the African group and the statement on behalf of G77 and China delivered by the State of Palestine.

Women are the backbone of every society and the Government of the Republic of Namibia is committed to ensuring the equal status of women in all aspects – politically, socially and economically.

In April of this year, Namibia, in its capacity as Chair of the Focal Points Network on Women, Peace and Security, hosted the annual capital level meeting of Focal Points in Windhoek, becoming the first African country to chair the Network and host such a meeting. At that meeting, Focal Points adopted a joint communiqué with recommendations for action on designing and implementing impact-driven national action plans on women, peace and security, strengthening the nexus between disarmament, small arms and light weapons and women, peace and security, integrating the WPS agenda in regional organizations and policies, and the role of youth in implementing the agenda.

Mr. Chair,

As we stand on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, we need to scale up action that will result in tangible outcomes for the implementation of the WPS Agenda. To this end, Namibia will be launching an International Women's Peace Center and we welcome commitments by other Member States on concrete deliverables in the coming years, such as Commitment 2025 on Women's Inclusion in Peace Processes by Finland and Spain. In 2020, we will also celebrate the anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Government of the Republic of Namibia prides itself in its implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and recently submitted its fifth country report covering the period from 2014-2019. Namibia has realized significant achievements in women in politics and decision-making positions, education and the girl child, eliminating HIV/AIDS and prevention of mother to child transmission, resettlement on commercial farms and implementation of social safety among others.

Despite these many gains, there are still some persistent challenges. The increasing number of gender-based violence cases, particularly those in the context of domestic relationships, remains worrying. And despite efforts by Government and civil society to tackle gender-based violence, more needs to happen. Changing

mindsets and harmful cultural norms that perpetuate gender based violence needs to be a priority of all involved in tackling this social ill.

Another challenge is climate change and the devastating effects it has on women in Namibia. Namibia is experiencing the worst drought in three decades and the effects of the drought on female headed households, particularly those in rural areas engaged in subsistence farming are indeed worrying.

Mr. Chair,

Against the background of these gains and challenges, the Government of Namibia has set out five priority areas for the advancement of women over the next five years, in line with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and they are as follows:

- Poverty eradication and food security
- Elimination of violence against women
- Access to productive resources such as land
- Sexual reproductive health and rights for women & men, with a special focus on maternal health and the elimination of HIV/AIDS
- Gender and climate change

Mr. Chair,

Namibia continues to advocate for increased gender equality around the world, and we set ourselves the challenge of leading by example in our policies, programmes and action. 2020 presents us an opportunity to renew our commitment to gender issues and Namibia stands ready to work hand-in-hand with all.

I thank you.