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STATEMENT

BY

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DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

**ON ITEM 5 OF THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE OPEN-ENDED
WORKING GROUP ON AGEING**

ON

**GENERAL DISCUSSION ON MEASURES TO ENHANCE THE
CONTRIBUTIONS OF OLDER PERSONS TO SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

**NEW YORK
5 JULY 2017**

Mr. Chairperson,

1. Namibia aligns itself with the statement delivered by Ecuador on behalf of the Group of Seventy Seven and China, and also wishes to congratulate you and the bureau on your election.
2. Allow me to firstly express Namibia's appreciation for the visit to our country this past March by Ms. Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, the Special Rapporteur on Aging. We eagerly await her report to the Human Rights Council later this year. The Ministries of Health and Social Services and of Poverty Eradication, have taken note of her preliminary recommendations, and I can assure you that Namibia is ready to work with the relevant human rights bodies to ensure the rights of all older persons through implementing these recommendations.

Mr. Chairperson,

3. In April 2016 the Namibian Government launched the Harambee Prosperity Plan (HPP), which seeks to ensure that Namibians all "pull together" and that no-one is left behind. Apart from working to implement Agenda 2030, the HPP targets bottlenecks, removes implementation challenges and accelerates development in clearly defined priority areas and within a short-term implementation period (2016-2020.) One targeted area is the social progression pillar which seeks to eliminate hunger, fast-track urban land service delivery and housing, improve sanitary conditions countrywide, reduce infant and maternal mortality and accelerate technical skills.
4. Within this social progression pillar, Government has continued to provide social safety nets to the most vulnerable members of our society, specifically the elderly, orphans and those living with disabilities. In our 2016/17 budget N\$3.3 billion (three point three billion Namibian Dollars) was allocated to this strategy as compared to N\$790 (Seven hundred and ninety million Namibian Dollars) ten years ago, an increase of over 300%.
5. The universal, non-contributory basic social grant for older persons (defined as anyone above 60 years) was nearly doubled from N\$600 (six hundred Namibian Dollars) to N\$1100 (one thousand one hundred Namibian Dollars) in 2015/2016, and further increases are planned. In the period of 2013-2014, the grant covered 98 percent of people above 60, up from 91 percent in

2011-2012. A regular increase in this old-age pension ensures that older persons are afforded the opportunity to live independently and with dignity.

Mr. Chairperson,

6. Among the many issues facing older persons in Namibia, and particularly older women, violence remains an important concern. In recognition of the seriousness of this matter, the Government has been running a national media campaign on Zero Tolerance for Gender-Based Violence for several years to foster the prevention, detection, reporting and prosecuting of such cases. We recognise that the primary focus has, however, been on gender-based violence against younger women and that a greater emphasis should be placed upon care for the elderly.
7. Namibia, therefore, continues to strive for a balanced approach to the issues of older persons, incorporating both a developmental and human rights-based approach. Although there is currently no guiding policy framework specifically on older persons, the Ministry of Health and Social Services has embarked on a consultative process with the view to formulating this national framework. More importantly, this process will involve older persons and is being guided primarily by the Madrid International Plan on Aging, as well as the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa.

I THANK YOU.