

**STATEMENT BY HER EXCELLENCY
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VICE-MINISTER OF FAMILY AND PROMOTION OF WOMEN**

**COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Fifty-Third Session**

ON AGENDA ITEM 3: Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

PRIORITY THEME: "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS"

New York, March 4, 2009

**Chairperson,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,**

It is with great honor that I take the floor at this session on the status of women on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Angola, on my own behalf and on behalf of my delegation. I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairperson, as well as your secretariat for having been elected to conduct our work. My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by Sudan on behalf of the Member Countries of the G77 and China, and as well as with the statement made by South Africa on behalf of SADC. We would like to commend all the speakers that have provided us with very comprehensive and valuable information in these past two days under the themes: "The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS" and "Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels".

We also take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the detailed and comprehensive report provided by the Secretary-General and we take note of the recommendations contained therein.

Mr. Chairperson ,

My Government attaches great importance to the discussion on the priority theme and underlines the undeniable contribution and sacrifices made by Angolan women during our fight for independence and peace, which could only be attained through equal sharing of responsibilities and partnerships at all levels.

Promoting gender equality continues to be a cornerstone for my Government's policies based on gender programmes, with a view to improving the harmonious development of the country, the well being of the families and the consolidation of our democracy.

In Angola, we have enacted policies to foster the economic empowerment of Angolan women, especially those active in the informal sector as well as in rural areas through micro-finance programmes and support to rural business projects, since we strongly believe that in addition to having access to education and employment, Angolan women should reduce their economic dependence on men in order to balance the inequalities that are still to be addressed.

However, social, economic and cultural aspects of our society, such as customary laws and discriminatory practices are still some of the challenges that hinder a major involvement of men and boys in the equal sharing of the responsibilities of care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS and the burden involving household work.

Therefore, taking into account these challenges, our strategic plan of combat against HIV/AIDS, elaborated by the Government, aimed to grant universal access to Antiretroviral Drugs and to stop Vertical Transmission, and the HIV/AIDS National Law establish intervention benchmarks calling for the inclusion of information on the pandemic in school curricula and places giving particular emphasis on the need to end discrimination and stigmatization practices against persons living with the disease as well as at equal caregiving between girls and boys.

Mr. Chairperson,

There have been some important developments in women's political participation in my country. One of the 12 priority areas of the Platform for Action, especially after the election process in September 2008, where Angola increased women's participation in the decision making process from 9.5% in 2004 to 40% in 2008 at all levels—and here we would like to highlight the increase in women's participation in parliament to 41% in 2008, contrasting with 12% in 2004. This represents indeed an important step forward, bearing in mind that by increasing representation in Parliament, women would be able to have a significant impact on policy-making processes and outcomes from a gender perspective.

It is fundamental that this step forward goes beyond its statistical meaning. Rather we feel in Angola that it is important to ensure that these gains can be maintained and to encourage women and men to work together towards building a new mentality to end stigmatization and promote gender equality, which, in our view, can be achieved only through granting wide access to education for all, without prejudice against their sex, race or religious belief, as well as employment, adequate housing, health and justice.

To conclude, Mr. Chairperson, the Government of Angola reiterates its commitment to continue fostering the sharing of responsibilities, including care giving in the context of prevention of the pandemic, and to supporting the important role that must be played by families and the civil society, while we are consolidating a democratic State strongly committed to Human Rights.

Thank you very much.