



STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER
WOMEN AFFAIRS GENDER AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

AT

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Mr. Chair

Allow me to congratulate you and your Bureau on your election and express our confidence that under your able stewardship, we will have successful deliberations. Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate one of our own, Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka on her appointment as Executive Director of UN Women, we assure her our support and full cooperation. Zimbabwe associate itself with statements delivered by the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the G77 and China, Guinea-Bissau on behalf of the Africa Group and by Malawi on behalf of SADC. Lastly allow me Mr Chairman, to thank the Secretary General for his elaborate report on the priority theme, “Challenges and Achievements in the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for Women and Girls”.

Mr. Chair

The Government of Zimbabwe prioritised MDG 1 and remains strongly committed to eradicating poverty and hunger. In this regard, several measures have been put in place namely:

- The Land Reform and Resettlement Programme, under which a 20% quota was reserved for women. As a result, 29% of land reform beneficiaries are women. To support women farmers a total of 4770 frontline agricultural extension workers have been employed of which 44.75% are women.
- In addition a Harmonized Social Cash Transfer programme has been put in place and currently benefits 53 233 households. Out of these 58 % are female headed households of which 36% are widowed with a large dependency ratio especially orphaned girls.

- A Broad Based Women's Economic Empowerment framework was developed to ensure women's effective participation in key sectors of the economy such as mining, agriculture and tourism.
- To operationalise this policy, a Women's Development Fund which requires no collateral was established to promote economic empowerment of women at grassroots level.

Mr. Chair

Regarding MDGs 2 and 3 which speak to the issues of universal access and gender parity in education, my Government is happy to report that;

- By 2012, Zimbabwe had achieved literacy rate of 96%.
- There is near parity in primary education with the net enrolment ratio at 97.9% for girls and 97.5% for boys.
- The attendance rate for girls is higher at 80% and grade progression from primary to secondary education for girls is at 93.5% compared to 92.07% for boys
- To support the girl child, government has an educational support program which ensures that at least 50% of beneficiaries should always be girls.

Mr. Chair

Zimbabwe remains committed to pursuing MDG 3 which prioritises women empowerment, gender equality and equity. To this end, Zimbabwe has put in place a new Constitution which is gender sensitive and generally considered as a women's document. The adoption of the new Constitution in 2013 is a major milestone in the history of Zimbabwe and most importantly in the lives of

Zimbabwean women. The constitution is progressive in terms of advancing women's economic, social and political rights. It contains an expansive bill of rights, gender equality provisions and elaborate rights for women. The Constitution also provides for the establishment of a Gender Commission, which has an enforcement clause to ensure compliance with the laws of the country. The Government has already started the process of realignment of existing laws to the constitution. The new constitution is also domesticating international instruments of gender.

Regarding women in decision making, Zimbabwe has had a female Vice President since 2005 and a President of the Senate. The country has seen the gradual increase of women's participation and representation in decision making positions, with women comprising 35% in the Lower House, 48% in the Senate .

Mr. Chair

Concerning MDG 5, the Government of Zimbabwe has put in place policies and mechanisms to decentralize antenatal and postnatal care, to all levels of care including advocacy at the community level. In addition, the policies on provider initiated testing and counselling have increased the number of pregnant women who access PMTCT to 95%.

Zimbabwe has made significant progress in the implementation of MDG 6 which witnessed a significant decline in the prevalence rate of HIV and has seen a reduction of infections from 30% in 2000 to 15% in 2013. In addition

people accessing Anti Retro-viral Therapy has also increased from 53% in 2009 to 79.5% in 2013, and 60% of these are women.

Mr. Chair

Despite these achievements, the following gaps and challenges remain:

- “Feminization of poverty” with indicators showing that the poor are predominantly rural and female.
- Women remain under represented in most economic sectors, with their highest representation being in domestic work and the agricultural sector.

Mr. Chair

The fact still remains that the implementation of the MDGs in Zimbabwe has been severely hampered by the illegal sanctions that were imposed upon our country shortly after the inception of the MDGs. I therefore call upon for the unconditional lifting of all unjust and unilateral sanctions imposed.

In conclusion Mr Chairman, the Government of Zimbabwe joins other member states in calling for the post 2015 framework to include:

- A transformative stand-alone goal which comprehensively covers gender issues with indicators that will reflect the level of empowerment and gender equality.

I thank you