



**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE MINISTER OF
WOMEN AFFAIRS, COMMUNITY, SMALL AND
MEDIUM ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT HON
DR. SITHEMBISO G.G. NYONI AT THE 66TH
SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE
STATUS OF WOMEN(CSW66)**

16 March 2022

Chairperson H. E. Ms. Mathu Joyini

Executive Director for UN Women – Ms. Sima Bahous

Honorable Ministers and Parliamentarians here present

Excellencies

Parliamentarians

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and gentlemen

Madame Chair

Zimbabwe congratulates you and the Bureau for presiding over the 66th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. We are confident that with your stewardship, the Commission will have successful deliberations.

Zimbabwe aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Kingdom of Lesotho on behalf of the African Group.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the extent of gender inequality, through the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women, children, the girl child, the elderly, youths and people living with disabilities. The same categories have also been vulnerable to the effects of climate change and disasters, as they are more reliant on natural resources for food, income and energy.

Chairperson,

The foregoing demonstrates the timeliness and relevance of the priority theme of this session, especially in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Zimbabwe, like other countries in the Southern African region is, particularly, vulnerable to climate induced hazards such as recurrent and more severe droughts, dry spells, floods, cyclones, and other natural calamities. The limited adaptive capacities, have resulted in the impacts of climate change being devastating. Given other challenges, such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as well as sporadic crop pests and animal disease outbreaks, the cumulative impact on the vulnerable groups in our societies is enormous. The above and other challenges have exacerbated gender

inequality, and have become major barriers to equitable and sustainable development.

Chairperson,

Zimbabwe has, at an international level, ratified the key instruments that provide for gender equality in the areas of climate change, environment and disaster risk reduction, including the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Kyoto Protocol of 1997, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Gender Action Plan of 2019, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). At the Regional level, Zimbabwe has signed the Protocol of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

The achievement of Gender Equality is also a priority and a long-term commitment for the Government of Zimbabwe, and gender perspectives have been incorporated in all national endeavors. The Constitution of Zimbabwe emphasizes equal rights for all and prohibits discrimination and inequality on the basis of sex. It provides for equality and equal rights in all spheres of state and public life, and accords women and men equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres. The Revised National Gender Policy and its Implementation Strategy provides the overall policy guiding framework for mainstreaming gender across all sectors, and strategies to increase gender

responsiveness on environment and natural resources management, Climate Change adaptation and mitigation.

Chairperson,

In order to restore progress in gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, we need to redouble our efforts, and recommit to ending gender inequality and other discriminatory practices. The attainment of all the gender related goals in the 2030 Agenda remain our best hope to recover, without leaving anyone behind, from the COVID-19 pandemic in a manner that guarantees the ability to cope with climate change and build resilience against future shocks and risks.

In that regard, the Government of Zimbabwe has created a conducive environment for the communities to build resilience to climate change in a gender responsive manner, through the implementation of many and varied programmes. The programmes, inter alia, include, solar powered community gardens, which are into horticultural production, using sustainable smart technology of solar powered boreholes and irrigation facilities, benefiting both women and men. This intervention is both an adaptation and a mitigatory measure. Other innovative initiatives include the Pfumvudza/Intwasa programme, a soil conserving and crop-yield boosting technic, which has been implemented country-wide and has recorded great success and enhanced food and nutrition security at the national and household levels.

In the same vein, I am pleased to announce that Zimbabwe held a joint side event with South Africa, with support from the International Atomic Energy

Agency, which showcased the peaceful use of nuclear technology to develop a drought and pest resistant variety of cowpeas in Zimbabwe. The new seed has boosted yields for women farmers in some arid parts of the country.

In conclusion, **Chairperson**, the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe remains committed to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in climate change, environment and disaster risk management programmes and policies. We call for international cooperation and commitment in the same light, given that climate change and its related natural calamities transcend national and other boundaries.

I thank you.