



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



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STATEMENT BY

**HONOURABLE SARAH SAYIFWANDA, MP
MINISTER OF GENDER AND WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT**

AT THE

**FIFTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

ON

**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"**

March 2, 2010
New York

*Chairperson,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,*

My delegation wishes to commend you for the manner in which you are conducting the affairs of this meeting and pledges its full support to you and your bureau in the discharge of your noble duty. My delegation is confident that you will steer the Session to a successful outcome. I want to thank the Secretary General for his informative reports which form a good basis for our discussions and follow-up actions.

Zambia wishes to align itself to the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of the Group of 77 and China and the African Group.

Chairperson,

Zambia welcomes the fifteenth year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as it will form the basis for intensified actions by the international community towards gender equity equality and empowerment of women. Zambia further recognises that the implementation of the Platform for Action is a vehicle for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. While this is the case, past reviews have demonstrated that there has been uneven progress. It is for this reason that we have come together at this session to share experiences and good practices which will enhance the realization of our previous commitments.

Chairperson, allow me to share some of our experiences in Zambia,

The incidence of gender based violence continues to be high especially among women and girls. Zambia remains committed to the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination. In order to address this scourge, Government has amended the Penal Code to strengthen penalties for the perpetrators of violence. In addition, Government has initiated the development of specific legislation as a measure aimed at further strengthening the protection of women from gender based violence which has been on the increase in the recent past. Some of the provisions in the proposed legislation include protection orders as well as compensation for the victims to ensure that their rights are fully protected. Furthermore, Government with the support of the civil society organisations and cooperating partners have developed a National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence which calls for the active involvement of government ministries, civil society organisations and faith based organisations. This partnership is making headway in tackling issues of Gender Based Violence.

Chairperson,

Government's efforts in addressing gender violence deserves the support of all stakeholders including cooperating partners who have often supported the development of National Action Plans without honoring pledged resources for their implementation. In this regard, I wish to urge the international community to review their approaches to addressing issues of gender equality and specifically, gender based violence if we are to eliminate the scourge.

Chairperson,

Government has further enacted the Anti-Human Trafficking Act No. 11 of 2008 which enables the prosecution of human traffickers and commits the government to providing protection services to victims of the crime. The enactment of this law has proven to be a deterrent to trafficking.

Chairperson,

In order to promote the economic empowerment of women and to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs, Government has established the Citizens Economic Empowerment Fund with a specific mandate of ensuring that women are given preference in accessing economic empowerment funds. In addition, Government in its national budget for 2010 has allocated additional funds for economic empowerment of women to the National Gender Machinery which will supplement the efforts of the Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission.

The financial sector has joined government in addressing women's access to credit and related financial services. With the leadership from the Bank of Zambia, the financial institutions are now beginning to engage more with women entrepreneurs in order to address some of the hurdles that women continue to face especially in relation to access to banking and financial services.

Further, Government is also implementing the Land Reform Programme in which 30 percent of the titled land is being allocated to women as another measure to empower women. This measure has contributed to an increase in the number of women accessing titled land. It is my government's view that providing women with security to land will enable them utilise title as collateral.

Chairperson,

In our pursuance to the attainment of MDG 2 on achieving universal primary education, Zambia has made progress by ensuring free primary education. At primary level, the ratio of girls to boys has been fairly stable at a level close to one for the period 2003 to 2008. However, the ratio of girls to boys in secondary school has declined from 0.90 to 0.73. Consequently, government is scaling up interventions to bridge the gaps through bursaries for the girls and other affirmative action measures.

Chairperson,

Before, I conclude my statement, I would like to echo the call for the accelerated establishment of a well resourced United Nations Gender Entity which will positively compliment the efforts of Member States in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women

Chairperson,

I wish to reiterate Zambia's commitment to the attainment of gender equity and empowerment of women. However, this goal will only be attained if adequate resources are mobilised and allocated for implementation. I, therefore, urge the international community to re-double its efforts in honouring its commitments towards the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.

I thank you.