



**Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Tanzania
to the United Nations**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT BY

**HON. MARGARET SIMWANZA SITTA,
MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, GENDER AND
CHILDREN OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**

AT THE

**53RD SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON
THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

WEDNESDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2009

**201 East 42nd Street, Room 1700, New York, New York 10017
Tel. No. (212) 972-9160**

**STATEMENT BY HON. MARGARET SIMWANZA SITTA, THE MINISTER FOR
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, GENDER AND CHILDREN OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF
TANZANIA AT THE 53rd SESSION OF COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN.**

WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2009

Madam Chairperson,

Allow me to express my delegation's confidence in your leadership to steer this meeting to its successful conclusion and assure you of my delegation support and cooperation.

We align ourselves with the statements read by H.E. Manto Tshabalala Msimang, Minister in the Presidency of South Africa on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and by H.E. Salma Ahmed Mohamed, Minister of Social Welfare, Women and Children, of Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Madam Chairperson,

The government of the United Republic of Tanzania is fully committed to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and has continually been taking measures to fulfill those commitments. Our constitution is clear on the issue of equality between men and women in social, economic and political spheres. We have ratified the conventions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and on the rights of the child as well as their optional protocols and have fulfilled our reporting obligations. In addition to a gender development policy, gender has been mainstreamed in sector ministries policies and programmes as well as in poverty reduction strategies (popularly known as MKUKUTA for Tanzania mainland and MKUZA for Zanzibar) however; mainstreaming gender in budgets remains a challenge. While these measures have registered improvements towards the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, male domination is still a challenge and efforts are still required to change gender relations. It is in this regard that my delegation welcomes the priority theme on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care giving, in the context of HIV/AIDS. It is my expectation that our deliberations in this session will provide us with an opportunity to share our experiences and challenges and come out with an outcome that will move us towards our goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Madam Chairperson,

The equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women is necessary for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Women are constrained with the triple burden of undertaking reproductive, productive and caring roles, which hinder their effective participation in social, economic activities and decision-making processes. Without women's effective participation many of the issues of importance to women will not be met. It is thus imperative that efforts are taken to ensure that men and boys equally share responsibilities.

The government of the United Republic of Tanzania recognizes the importance of equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women and has taken several measures to address the situation. The constitution, laws as well as the employment policy categorically prohibits discrimination of women in the place of work, and provides for equal pay between men and women. In the Public Service, the Public Service Management and Employment Policy clearly stipulates that employers should provide flexible working hours and part time working that allow employees to provide a better service to clients and enable employees particularly women with children to combine more easily their work with their domestic and family responsibilities; furthermore a maximum of fourteen days paid compassionate leave is provided in addition to the normal leave. This affords an employee to meet the caring emergencies.

According to the Labour Relations Act No. 6 of 2004, women are given 84 days paid maternity leave and men are allowed three days paternity leave. The government will make a follow-up on the uptake of the paternity leave to assess whether extra days are needed.

The use of domestic servants to assist in the caring responsibilities has been one of the ways that many employed women have been able to relieve the triple burden. In recognition of the plight and vulnerability of many domestic workers, the government has set a minimum wage for domestic workers. In addition, the government, the Worker's Union and the civil societies are undertaking the sensitization of the domestic workers' rights. The expansion of secondary education has however allowed many girls to continue with their education and provided them with opportunities to look beyond the domestic work market or even if they do pursue the line of domestic work after secondary education they are more informed of their rights and better to negotiate for a better wage and working environment. Thus in the longer term, as we expand our education and training opportunities for girls and open up more credit facilities for self employment, fewer girls will opt for domestic work. Hence men and women will have to equally share responsibilities.

In the context of HIV/AIDS the government has undertaken several measures including enactment of the HIV and AIDS (prevention and Control Act No. 2 of 2008) as well as advocacy campaigns to promote equal sharing of responsibilities in the caring for HIV/AIDS patients. Despite these measures women and girls still face the brunt of caring for the sick and in particular as we increase home-based care concept. In addition care of the orphans continues to be challenge for women and girls. To protect the caregivers, information on HIV/AIDS as well as training for the caregivers is provided.

Madam Chairperson,

The major challenge to equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women is deeply rooted and entrenched in the socialization process that has earmarked caring

as the responsibility of women. Continuous education and advocacy to men and women, girls and boys to change the mindset is needed. It is not only men that have to change but women have to accept that men have a role and at the same time we need to dispense with the stereotype notion that men are not doing any caring work. In this regard we need to conduct research and collect sex and age disaggregated data to understand how men and women share responsibilities and the constraints faced by each. At the same time, time-use surveys have to be undertaken regularly so as to inform policy on the sharing responsibilities to enable appropriate interventions to be undertaken.

I wish however to underscore that the role of men and boys in challenging and in changing the unequal power relations is critical and hence we need to work with them in this endeavor. Men and boys need to appreciate the benefits that they will get by equally sharing responsibilities with women and girls. It is, however, important that initiatives to work with men and boys are placed in the overall context of promotion of gender equality. Furthermore the increased support to men and boys should not mean a reduction of necessary support to women and girls.

Madam Chairperson,

Equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women has also to go hand in hand with improvement in the infrastructure and technology to reduce the burden of the caring responsibilities. Such improvements include water availability within the homes, health facilities that are equipped, staffed and near the homes, stoves that use less fuel wood and labour saving devices. These improvements require resources, which is again a constraint for many developing countries. In this endeavour we call for debt forgiveness to free resources so as to improve public infrastructures and technical cooperation especially in the area of technology development as well as in statistics and research.

Let me conclude by reiterating my government's commitments to the achievements of the goals for gender equality and women empowerment and our willingness to work with the international community in the realization of the goals for gender equality and women's empowerment.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.