



# REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



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**STATEMENT BY**

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

**AT THE**

**FIFTY-FIFTH 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"**

February 24, 2011  
New York



**Chairperson,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,**

My delegation wishes to congratulate you for the manner in which you are conducting the affairs of this Session and pledges its full support to you and your bureau in discharging your duties.

My delegation aligns itself to the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and Namibia on behalf of SADC. We also thank the Secretary General for his reports on this subject which form a good basis for our discussions.

**Chairperson,**

At the last session of this Commission my delegation pledged its support for the accelerated establishment of a well resourced United Nations Gender entity which will positively respond to the requirements of Member States. We are pleased that this has come to fruition with the birth of UN Women. It is our hope that UN Women will indeed work to support Member States as they strive to deliver on national commitments on gender equality. We therefore pledge our full support to Madam Bachelet in the implementation of her vision and strategy for the organisation.

**Chairperson,**

Society has always appreciated that to educate women is to empower families, communities, the nation and the world. The realization of the United Nations MDG's rests upon the measures individual states put in place to empower women and the girl child with the necessary education and training as well as other forms of economic abilities to prepare them to take up leading roles in the decision making process.

My delegation is pleased to inform this meeting that my Government recently launched the Sixth National Development Plan (SNDP) (2011 - 2016) whose theme is "sustained economic growth and poverty reduction." In line with Government's commitment to gender equity and equality, the SNDP prioritises gender equity and equality as a prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable national development and the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals. The SNDP also identifies education, training, science and technology as prime movers of the development of our nation. It is for this reason that my



delegation welcomes the theme of the Fifty-fifth Session of the CSW whose focus is on these issues.

**Chairperson,**

Noting the importance of education in the enhancement of the country's socio-economic development, Zambia has continued to record increased enrolment levels of both girls and boys at primary, basic and high school levels. Currently, the country recorded an increase in girl child enrolment levels in primary school. There has also been an improvement towards achieving gender parity at primary, basic and high school levels.

Despite these gains however, disparities still exist between male and female pupils, with only approximately 85 per cent of the girls completing high school as compared to 93 per cent of boys. This disparity has been due to the numerous challenges affecting the girl child that still remain, including: the lack of teachers due to factors such as the brain drain, the HIV and AIDS pandemic, sub-standard learning environment, lack of learning and teaching material and the high teacher-pupil ratio.

**Chairperson,**

While the challenges that I have outlined affect both girls and boys I wish to highlight some of those areas where girls are specifically disadvantaged these include: Inadequate bursaries for girls from low income level families, early marriages, high pregnancy and dropout ratios and traditional practices that hinder girls' education.

In its efforts to address these challenges therefore, Government has decided to focus on expanding access to high school and tertiary education in order to ensure that boys and girls completing school at primary continue with their education at higher levels. It is our vision that every boy and girl should complete their education and acquire the relevant skills to enable them have a decent life in their adulthood.

**Chairperson,**

My Government recognises that science and technology is a critical ingredient for the effective participation of women in today's globalised world. My Government has, in that regard, developed special programmes which include special technical high schools for girls and bursary schemes for girls and women pursuing science and technology programmes.

We recognise that we have limited technological equipment and facilities to enable as many of our boys and girls access the ever changing and

improving technologies. We therefore appeal to our cooperating partners including the private sector to ensure that the new technologies that are being developed are accessible and affordable, as they will have a positive impact in shaping the lives of the girls and boys in our communities.

**Chairperson,**

My Government considers that legislation is important in the promotion and protection of the rights of individuals. Zambia reaffirms its commitment to the domestication of the CEDAW and has in that regard presented the Anti-Gender Based Violence Bill to Parliament for enactment. Once passed, the Act will provide for safe spaces for girls and women and protection orders for survivors of Gender Based Violence. We believe these measures will enhance the legislative framework for the promotion of gender equity and equality in education and employment.

**Chairperson,**

Zambia is committed to achieving the internationally agreed goals related to women. These goals can only be fully realised if concerted efforts at national level are complemented with the enhanced support from our international cooperating partners.

**Chairperson,**

My delegation welcomes the decision to take on board the proposal we made at the last session to put forward the dates of this session which will now enable delegates to travel back to their respective countries to celebrate International Women's Day.

My delegation looks forward to a spirited discussion of all the issues before this Commission and to an action-oriented outcome that will contribute to realising the internationally agreed goals as they relate to education and in so doing further promote gender equity, equality, and the empowerment of women.

**I thank you.**



