



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

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**STATEMENT BY**

**HON. SOFIA SIMBA (MP) MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
GENDER AND CHILDREN OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**

**AT THE 56<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN:  
“THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN AND THEIR ROLE IN POVERTY  
AND HUNGER ERADICATION, DEVELOPMENT AND CURRENT CHALLENGES”**

**NEW YORK, 28 FEBRUARY 2012**

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**Chairperson,**

My delegation congratulates you and other members of the Bureau on your election and assures you of our full cooperation and support.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the distinguished representatives of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Tunisia on behalf of the African Group and Angola on behalf of SADC member states.

**Chairperson,**

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania has made the empowerment of rural women one of its priority agenda. Rural women provide 80 percent of labour force in rural areas and producing 60 percent of food production. Though, they are the main food producers, the environment, do not allow them to own their own wealth.

Recognizing that the majority of women reside in the rural areas, and that improvement of the agriculture sector would greatly promote rural women empowerment and enhance efforts to alleviate poverty, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania has laid down the foundation to overcome challenges facing rural women especially in agriculture sector.

**Chairperson,**

The Government has developed Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP) for Mainland and Zanzibar, and "Kilimo Kwanza" literally translated as "Agriculture First" which aims at modernizing and improving the productivity of our agriculture sector. Under these programmes, farmers are facilitated to buy Government subsidized farm inputs like fertilizers at a reduced cost. These have enabled more rural women to access agricultural technologies, credits as well as enabled them to own property and produce more food crops, and therefore, reducing poverty.

There is also a Five Year Development Plan with the purpose of economic growth and poverty eradication which gives priority to agriculture, industry, infrastructure and social services. In this regard, the current Government has been increased on agricultural sector.

**Chairperson,**

In the same line, the Government has revised its National Land Policy of 1995 and enacted Land Law Act of 1999 as well as the Village Act of 1999. This has enabled women to own clan and family land on equal rights with men. The Government working with NGOs and international development partners have made a step to educating men and women on the importance of women owning land and other means of production. More schools have been built in rural areas to enable both girls and boys attend schools. Through alternative learning schools for drop outs and vocational training, girls and boys have been sensitized and empowered to be active in development activities.

**Chairperson,**

Despite these achievements, still there is great extent of inequality between rural women and urban women. Such inequalities are contributed by several factors such as lack of access to productive resources like land, Cultural and traditional values, lack of education, training, insufficient social infrastructure services, poor technologies and women workload which limit women's ability to participate actively in economic endeavors.

**Chairperson,**

Improvement of infrastructure is another critical area that the Government is focusing in its efforts to stimulate empowerment of rural women. However, infrastructure development has not been provided with adequate investment, especially direct foreign investment. It is in this endeavor that the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania has enacted a bill to support public-private partnerships in road infrastructure. We are thus calling upon the international financiers to provide direct foreign investments geared towards agricultural infrastructure development, such as irrigation, roads to the markets and modern technologies.

**Chairperson,**

In conclusion, the Government the United Republic of Tanzania remains committed towards creating favorable environment which will encourage the empowerment of rural women and stimulate their role in poverty and hunger eradication. We urge for a stronger partnership between Government and development partners in order to address the challenges face rural women in the processes of poverty and hunger eradication.

**I Thank You**