



MALAWI

STATEMENT

BY

THE

MINISTER OF GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL WELFARE,
HONOURABLE ANITA KALINDE, MP

PRESENTED

AT

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THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Chairperson,

Allow me to join all the previous speakers in congratulating you and your bureau on the excellent manner in which you are conducting matters of the committee. You can be assured of my delegation's cooperation and support.

My delegation would like to align with the statements delivered by the distinguished representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 (G77) and China, and Chad on behalf of the African Group, and I express the full support to the Addis Declaration of the African Union.

Elimination and Prevention of all forms of Violence against Women and Girls is placed high on Malawi's development agenda. The Government of Malawi reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1880 and 1890, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, AU Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa; the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality, and the SADC Gender and Development Protocol among others.

Chairperson,

Malawi has domesticated the international instruments to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through the Constitution which has enshrined the bill of rights in Chapter 4 and it states that violence against women is an evil that needs to be eradicated in the society. In addition, the Prevention of Domestic Violence law of 2006, the Child Justice and Protection Act of 2010, and the Deceased Estates (Wills, Inheritance and Protection) Act of 2011 have also been enacted. 120 prosecutors, magistrates and social workers were trained in the gender related laws in 2012 and 34 Child Justice Magistrates, 37 Probation Officers, 39 Prosecutors and 34 court clerks were trained in child justice system to strengthen the provision of the judicial services in all the Magistrates Courts in the country. Two child friendly courts are operational in two major cities of Blantyre and Zomba.

The Malawi Parliament last week passed the Gender Equality Bill into law to strengthen the operationalization of CEDAW. The Act offers a protective mechanism towards the violation of the rights of females and outlines explicitly the areas under which discrimination, harmful cultural practices and sexual harassment are prohibited among others.

Chairperson,

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS II) which is an overarching policy framework has included gender mainstreaming as one of the priority areas which covers strengthening of institutional capacity, engendering of budgets, eradication of gender based violence and the promotion of participation of women in Politics and decision-making. The Government has put in place a National Response Framework to serve as a strategic policy instrument for the multi-sectoral approach in the prevention and eradication of gender based violence in Malawi.

Malawi has established Victim Support Units in 34 police stations, 13 police posts and 200 Support Units in 300 Traditional Authority institutions. Malawi has established 20 One Stop Centres in the central and district hospitals and 4 of them are operational. To date 30% of the reported cases of violence are prosecuted. The multi-sectoral approach has enabled Malawi to work with "*Men for Gender Equality Now*" an NGO which has been conducting travelling conferences from 2003 in collaboration with their regional counterparts. Annually the organisation reaches about 1.5 million people while the multi-media campaign reaches over 6

million people. Consequently the culture of silence has been broken and there is a marked increase in the number of reported cases of violence against women.

Chairperson,

Furthermore, women and girls, who constitute 52% of the population in Malawi, are more vulnerable to HIV transmission and impacts of AIDS than men and boys. Of the 920,000 people living with HIV, about 470,000 are women and 120,000 are children aged 0 to 14 years. Sexual abuse of children, poverty, unequal power relations, high levels of illiteracy, burden of care that women shoulder, poor access to HIV and AIDS services including care and treatment are still troubling issues. The fight against HIV and AIDS at all the levels continues. Malawi has also accelerated the implementation of safe motherhood programme with the establishment of an office in the Office of the President and Cabinet and involvement of the traditional leaders. The soothing news is that according to UN estimates of 2012 maternal mortality ratio has declined to 460 from 675 per 100,000 live births in 2010.

Chairperson,

Despite the progress in the fight against gender based violence, challenges such as inadequate resources to roll out best practices, increased natural disasters due to climate change, limited access to justice services; poverty among women, poor and inadequate infrastructure, persistent harmful cultural practices, and resistance to behavior change remain.

The assistance rendered by the United Nations family and other development partners towards the fight against gender based violence is appreciated. Malawi is however appealing to the United Nations and all the cooperating partners to increase resources allocation for the Violence Against Women programmes.

Finally, allow me to conclude by stressing the importance of partnerships in the realization of peaceful societies free from violence.

I thank you.