

# REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



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## STATEMENT

BY

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FIRST SECRETARY, DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION  
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ON

**AGENDA ITEM 56: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN  
TO THE THIRD COMMITTEE**

OF

**THE 63<sup>RD</sup> REGULAR SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York  
15 October 2008

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you and members of the Bureau on your election. My delegation has every confidence in your leadership to steer the work of the committee to a successful conclusion.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Antigua and Barbuda and Malawi on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and SADC respectively. I also wish to thank the Secretary General for his informative reports under this agenda item which serves as a good basis for our discussions.

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia attaches great importance to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; and the outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly. Zambia remains committed to enhancing women's participation in national development, which is in line with the Government vision of achieving full participation of women and men in the development process at all levels in order to attain equity and equality between the sexes.

We are mindful that implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is essential to achieving the Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. Zambia has, in this regard continued to pursue policies and programmes aimed at enhancing the empowerment of women and ensure their active involvement in nation building.

Since the adoption of the National Gender policy in 2002, government has instituted measures to facilitate accelerated implementation of the National Gender Policy, and has mainstreamed gender into the Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP) which serves to commit the nation to achieving gender parity. In addition, Government has included a specific chapter on gender and development identifying five areas of focused intervention which include measures aimed at increasing girls' retention in the education system; reducing gender based violence; reversing the transmission of HIV; increased access to titled land; and capacity building in gender analysis.

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia acknowledges that cases of gender based violence continue to increase the risks of HIV transmission especially among women and children. In recognition of the adverse impact of gender based violence on the lives of women and children, Government has reviewed the Penal Code to introduce

specific provisions on sexual offences. While the Penal Code has been reviewed to introduce these provisions on sexual offences, Government has also initiated measures aimed at developing comprehensive legislation to address gender based violence. It is the view of Government that once this initiative is implemented, cases of gender violence will reduce drastically.

Mr. Chairman,

In responding to increased participation of girls in education, government has introduced various administrative measures which include the abolition of school fees; implementation of affirmative action measures through the provision of bursary schemes to girls at tertiary level; and the introduction of weekly boarding schools especially in rural areas. Cooperating and development partners continue to play a pivotal role in supporting girls' education by offering bursaries to affected girls.

The implementation of these measures have translated into positive results which include attainment of parity in enrolment at Grades one to seven; increased retention of the girl child at higher levels of education; and increased representation of girl children in scientific and technological fields.

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia is aware that socialization and attitudes and beliefs obtaining in patriarchal systems of society that rate men as superior to women especially when it comes to equal participation in decision making, economic empowerment and access to education are some of the challenges which my government is addressing. In this regard, a sensitization programme of traditional leadership has been put in place so that the leaders can influence change in cultural and traditional practices that adversely affect women. This has so far helped in reducing negative attitudes towards women.

Mr. Chairman,

While Zambia has recorded progress in gender equality and equity, the country continues to face challenges in meeting the internationally agreed goals. This includes the high maternal mortality which is exacerbated by the limited availability of qualified medical personnel, and inadequate equipment and medication in public health institutions, especially in rural areas. It is, however, worth mentioning that while maternal mortality is still high, Zambia has recorded a reduction in maternal mortality from 729 in 2002 to 449 per 100,000 live births in 2007.

Other major challenges that continue to hinder Government's attainment of the goals set out in the international instruments on gender include:

- Negative attitudes towards gender mainstreaming;
- Inadequate resources for women's economic empowerment;
- High poverty levels, particularly among women; and
- The HIV and AIDS pandemic which places a great burden of care on women.

Mr. Chairman

It is clear that the problems facing women are wide and varied and require the concerted effort of the international community to effectively address these challenges. Zambia like other developing countries requires not only financial assistance for gender programmes but also technical assistance and capacity building in order to realize the agreed international goals relating to women. Zambia therefore recognizes the important work of UNIFEM, UNFPA and other international gender specialist organizations which also need adequate resources to fulfill their mandate of providing direct assistance at the country level.

I wish to conclude by reaffirming Zambia's commitment to promoting and protecting women's human rights and the attainment of gender equality and empowerment of women.

I thank you