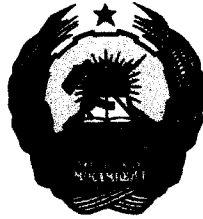


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REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

Statement by

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Delegation of Mozambique

before the Third Committee

on the agenda item 62:

on Advanced of Women

64th session of the General Assembly

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Mr. Chairperson,

As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairperson, and the members of the bureau on your election and assure you my delegation's full support and cooperation.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the distinguished representatives of Sudan and Malawi on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the Southern African Development Community, respectively.

My delegation would like to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the comprehensive reports before the Committee, under this agenda item. The recommendations and conclusions contained therein merit our collective and serious consideration.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Republic of Mozambique attaches great importance to the issues on gender equality and advancement of women. As a matter of fact the foundation for the Mozambican government policies and strategies is enshrined in our national constitution, in the principles of equal rights for all, men and women, and of gender equality.

Therefore, in pursuit of these noble principles the government of the Republic of Mozambique has promoted the creation of institutional mechanisms, policies and strategies that enable the advancement of women in all spheres of the economic and social fabric of the country while adhering to many international instruments on women and development. The institutional mechanisms include the following institutions:

- Ministry for Women and Social Action;
- National Council for Advancement of Women;
- Women Forum;
- Commission on Gender and Social and Environmental Affairs;
- Bureau of Women Members of Parliament; and
- Network of Women in Government and Parliament.

Women Forum is a network comprising 60 members from government institutions, trade unions, political parties, donor agencies and other entities committed to gender equality and advancement of women. It represents the voice of the civil society, acting as an important partner of the government in overall strategy aimed to promote gender equality and women empowerment.

Mr. Chairperson;

In terms of national policies it is worth to mention the National Plan on the Advancement of Women (2002-2006) and the approval by the Government of Mozambique in 2006 of the Gender Policy and the Strategy for its Implementation. The country's gender policy sets up principles that allow the identification of the appropriate actions aimed at promoting gender equality, respect of human rights and strengthening the participation of women in development process.

In this regard it is important to highlight the importance placed by the Government of Mozambique in programs that increase the enrolment of girls in schools and adult education, particularly in rural areas, where the majority of our people live, along with economic empowerment of women through their participation in income generation activities.

Mr. Chairperson;

The economic empowerment of women is part and parcel of the overall strategy of the advancement of women. We have learned from history that, in many societies, women have been subjugated through out the years due to their weak economic condition linked to the lack of access and control of resources. To change this situation and promote economic empowerment of women, the Government of Mozambique has, among other things:

- approved and started the dissemination of the new land law, since 1997, that explicitly enshrines equal rights between men and women on land possession, including rights on land succession and on land ownership;
- revised the Labor Law in order to explicitly highlight the principle of equality of rights between men and women in labor market;
- approved a new Family Law that takes into consideration the Constitution of the Republic and other instruments of international law on the matter;
- revised the Commercial Code in order to extend to women the right to exercise the commercial activities and to access to credit.

Mr. Chairperson;

As part of the international system that addresses issues of collective and common concern, the Government of the Republic of Mozambique is signatory of several international and regional Conventions and commitments on gender equality and advancement of women, *inter alia*, the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

(CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and the Platform of Action, the SADC Declaration on Gender, the Solemn Declaration on Gender in Africa; the Protocol to African Charter on Human Rights; the Optional Protocol of CEDAW, and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

As a result of our international commitment to gender equality and advancement of women, the Government of Mozambique has approved the following national laws:

- Law on Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children;
- Law Against Trafficking in Persons, particularly Women and Children;
- Law on Domestic Violence Against Women;

Yet, as a result of the implementation of international commitments, in the period 2005 - 2009 the women represented 37% of 250 members in the Assembly of the Republic, 24% out of a total of 25 cabinet members, 26% out of a total of 23 Permanent Secretaries. At local level the highest figure is of 36,3% out of 11 provincial permanent Secretaries followed by 29,7% out of 790 members of municipalities. All these should be seen taking into account the 30% target for 2005 set up by the SADC Gender Declaration.

Mr. Chairperson,

Violence against women and girls should be condemned by all of us and appropriate measures should be put in place at national level to prevent more suffering of human beings at the household and in the society at large. My delegation supports the Secretary General's campaign denominated "United to End Violence Against Women" which started in 2008, and will continue to 2010.

In this regard, the Government of Mozambique has approved the Law on Domestic Violence Against Women which provide assistance to the victims and inhibits such action of violence through appropriate sanctions to the perpetrators.

The National Plan on Prevention and Combat to Violence Against Women for 2008 to 2012 provides strategic guidelines to be considered in the action plans of key ministries such as Ministry of Interior (Police), Ministry of Health and Ministry of Women and Social Action. It is worth to note that in Mozambique sections for assistance to women and children victims of domestic violence are installed in police stations.

Another way of contributing to halting violence against women and children is through civic education as demonstrated by the creation a Group called “**All Against Violence**”, comprising representatives of the civil society and those from government institutions. This partnership has been important in raising public awareness and in advocacy in favor of the victims of violence.

I wish to put on record the commendable efforts of Mozambique’s First Lady, Her Excellency Maria de Luz Guebuza, in advancing the cause of women through initiatives such as advocacy in maternal and child health and economic empowerment of women and youth.

Mr. Chairperson,

In spite of all above achievements in Mozambique the advancement of women is still challenged by gender stereotypes, which still impede women from reaching higher positions in the public and private sectors and low level of active involvement of women in decision making process. This

situation is exacerbated by adverse effects of the current world financial and economic crisis, food and energetic crises and climate change.

As it is the case in many developing countries, if the current situation prevails, we will hardly achieve our goals on advancement of women without the generous assistance from the international community. Hence, we appeal to our bilateral donors, the European Union and the United Nations System, in particular UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNICEF, UNECA, ILO and UNIDO to continue providing their valuable support to our development efforts.

Finally, my Government hopes that the reform of the United Nations gender architecture will progress and be completed in beyond this session. Mozambique will continue to support this process in order to define a composite entity at the highest level with the political, technical and financial capacities to strengthen the agenda for the advancement of women in all regions.

I THANK YOU