



**Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Swaziland
to the United Nations**

STATEMENT BY

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KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND**

BEFORE THE THIRD COMMITTEE

OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

13 OCTOBER 2010

NEW YORK

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Chairperson,

Allow me to thank all the various speakers for their informative and thought-provoking presentations under this agenda item. I further thank the Secretary-General for his reports.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Malawi on behalf of the African Group and the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Chairperson,

The Kingdom of Swaziland strongly believes that without equal participation of women in political, social and economic spheres, sustainable development and social justice would not be achieved. In this regard, our Government is fully committed to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as we believe it is the proper policy framework to advance the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the country.

The Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland recognizes women as equal citizens and has committed herself to the promotion and protection of their human rights. Apart from the Beijing Platform for Action, Swaziland is party to the several critical human rights instruments all of which promote gender equality and respect for the rights of women.

On this note, we are proud to announce that Cabinet has approved the National Gender Policy. The process of the development of this policy was widely consultative. This Policy is meant to guide and direct the planning, programming and implementation of national, regional, community and sectoral development programmes and projects through a gender lens. Also, it will provide a legal framework for institutionalizing gender mainstreaming at all levels and in all sectors, including the allocation of adequate resources to achieve this goal.

At continental level, the Kingdom of Swaziland is actively participating in the African Women's Decade 2010-2020 proclaimed at the 12th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in 2009, in Addis Ababa.

Chairperson,

Our Constitution provides for non-discrimination and the rights and freedoms of women. We therefore welcome the recent establishment of the new United Nations Gender Entity, namely UN-WOMEN and look forward to its operationalization by January 2011. We believe UN-WOMEN will be a dynamic and strong champion for women and girls, providing them with a powerful voice at the international, regional and local levels.

We also congratulate Her Excellency Ms. Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile on her historic appointment as the first head of this new entity and we look forward to constructive co-operation with her in the near future.

Chairperson,

The Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland is committed to improving the health of women and girls and has made significant progress in the achievement of MDG 5 (Improvement of Maternal Health). For example, we have improved the integration of reproductive health services within all levels of the health system, improved sexual and reproductive health commodity security, integration of prevention and treatment of STIs in the health care delivery system, expanded Prevention of Mother-to Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV to cover over 80 percent of health facilities in 2009 from 2 percent in 2003, increased coverage in the distribution of Anti-Retroviral Therapy medication, implementation of integrated management of childhood illnesses to promote child survival, introduction of male involvement in programming and up-scaling of efforts to reduce maternal mortality as part of the Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA).

In this regard we acknowledge with appreciation the work of UNFPA in its efforts to enhance support to our country and region, especially regarding the achievement of MDG 4 (Reduction of Child Mortality) and MDG 5 (Improvement of Maternal Health).

Chairperson,

Despite significant progress in our quest and commitment to the advancement of women, many challenges still remain in place. Amongst these are poverty and HIV and AIDS. In Swaziland, women provide 90% of all care and support for people with AIDS related illnesses. Women and girls, including those who are themselves HIV positive, also bear the physical and psychological burden of HIV and AIDS care. Women thus carry a 'triple jeopardy' of AIDS: as people infected with HIV, as mothers of infected children, and as carers of partners, parents or orphans with AIDS. When women care for others their labour is often lost and this has a major impact on their own well-being and on that of the household.

However, these challenges will not deter us from striving towards the advancement of women and promoting their contribution to society. The main challenges are due to lack of resources. The ongoing economic, food insecurity and energy crises as well as climate change threaten to erode the gains already made. Further, not enough has been done to fulfil the commitments undertaken at various UN conferences. We therefore reiterate our call for further strengthened co-operation from our development partners on the transfer of resources through development assistance, trade, investment, technology transfer and human resources development.

Chairperson,

Violence against women and girls persists in every part of the world as a pervasive violation of the enjoyment of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality, development, peace and the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Millennium Development Goals.

In this regard, the Kingdom of Swaziland condemns and rejects violence against women in all its forms and manifestations. We further acknowledge that the consequences of violence against women are often severe and long-lasting. It is for this reason that legislation to address domestic and sexual violence is currently being promulgated and will soon be passed as an Act of Parliament.

Our Government has also established a Sexual Offences Unit. This further demonstrates our commitment towards developing comprehensive care for women and children who have suffered from sexual exploitation, violence and abuse.

To this end we would also like to thank UNIFEM for its support extended to our Government in support of our country and regional objectives to achieve the elimination of violence against women.

Chairperson,

The Kingdom of Swaziland recognizes that human trafficking, especially women and girls continues to pose a serious challenge to humanity, and it thus requires a concerted international response. To this end, we are pleased to be part of the consensus that resulted in the adoption of the new UN Global Plan of Action Against Trafficking In Persons in July 2010. This Global Plan of Action takes into consideration the different capabilities and needs of developing and developed countries whether they are Supply, Transit or Destination Countries in a comprehensive manner, and in detailing the efforts to be undertaken by Member States, taking into consideration the vital importance of international cooperation, technical assistance and capacity building.

We firmly believe that the adoption of this Global Plan of Action is a landmark achievement that will accelerate efforts towards ending victimization, prosecuting perpetrators, preventing and protecting all people from falling into the evil jaws of organized crime; and furthermore, compensating victims and supporting national efforts and relevant organizations in their work towards this end. We hope that the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, will be operationalized as soon as possible for the benefit of the victims of trafficking.

Our Government also participated in the adoption of a Strategic Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children in the SADC Region.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate my government's commitment to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as all other internationally agreed development goals related to women.

I thank you for your attention.