

MALAWI

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY
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**TO THE THIRD COMMITTEE ON
AGENDA ITEM 27: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

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NEWYORK**

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Chairperson,

1. At the outset allow me, on behalf of the Malawi delegation, to congratulate you, for the excellent manner in which you are conducting the deliberations today. As I am speaking for the first time during this session, permit me also to congratulate you and the Bureau for being elected Bureau chair and members respectively. Please be assured that the Malawi delegation will work with you for the successful fulfillment of the task that lies ahead.

Chairperson,

2. The Malawi delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on this agenda item by the Honorable Sofia Simba, Minister for Community Development, Gender and Children from the United Republic of Tanzania who spoke on behalf of the SADC.

3. Let me at this juncture commend the Secretary General, for his commitment in issues of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and thank him for the very informative reports on this important topic; we also thank the chair of the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women.

4. Malawi is cognizant of the strong and wide-ranging instruments made by the international community on gender equality and women's rights. Among these is the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, and other internally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals which all recognize that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty. Furthermore, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in 2005 under the auspices of the African Union (AU) underscored the high importance the rights of women has in Africa and provides the basis for holding governments accountable for advancing the status of women in our respective countries.

5. At its 12th Ordinary Session in 2009, in Addis Ababa the AU Assembly adopted the decision to declare 2010 -2020 as the African Women's Decade as a measure that would boost women's economic participation tier empowerment by among others re-invigorating commitments to accelerated implementation of agreed global and regional commitments of gender equality and women empowerment. This decade launched by His Excellency Ngwazi Professor Bingu wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, during his tenure as AU Chairperson on 15 October 2010 in Kenya.

Chairperson,

6. Closer to home we have the all-encompassing and binding SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. The Protocol encompasses commitments made in all regional, global and continental instruments for achieving gender equality, thereby enhancing these instruments by addressing gaps and setting specific measurable targets where these do not already exist; additionally the Protocol advances gender equality by ensuring accountability by all SADC member states, and providing a forum for the sharing of best practices, peer support and review.

7. Malawi is a party to these regional and global commitments and strictly upholds that uplifting women at all levels is a fast-track vehicle to achieving social and economic development and the eradicate poverty at all levels.

8. Malawi is one of the countries in southern Africa and Africa at large which is incorporating gender in all its development efforts through its home-grown medium-term Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MDGS). Among the strategies is the development of gender training materials including the Gender Training Manual, the creation of Gender Focal Points that have been trained in gender issues and oriented on their Terms Of References (TORs) to serve as contact points for gender issues between the Ministry and the institutions they work in.

9. Malawi has a well-crafted National Gender Policy and National Gender Programme, and is currently implementing a programme on increasing women's participation in politics and decision making which launched the 50-50 Campaign for the 2009 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections. This resulted in an increase from 14 percent to 22 percent of women parliamentarians. The Ministry has currently developed a 50-50 Campaign Strategy for the forthcoming Local Government Elections.

10. Because the Malawi Government fully recognizes that gender equality and empowerment of women is globally recognized as a human right and integral issue to achieving MDGs, efforts have been made to elevate women into decision-making positions as well as address health, social and economic issues that impede upon attaining these goals.

Chairperson,

11. As for our local instruments, Malawi is pleased to inform you that a review has been done of gender related laws including the Deceased Estates (Wills, Inheritance and Protection) Bill the Marriage, Divorce and Family relations, Gender Mainstreaming guidelines and their checklist Management of Human Resources including Gender Budgeting Guidelines just to mention a few.

12. The Government Malawi implemented a large scale agricultural input subsidy programme in 2005/6 and 2008-9. This has transformed the lives of many rural women enhancing the food security and promotion of the nutrition status of their households;

13. The bottom line is always important and in this score, the Government has been mobilizing resources through boosting revenue collection to meet the development agendas including the MDGs for the benefit of citizens without necessarily depending on Official Development Assistance. In this regard, Malawi set aside K50 million [over\$300,000] for Social Cash Transfer Programme targeting vulnerable groups include widows and orphans.

14. To make sure that every man, woman, boy, girl and child's rights are protected, the Malawi Government is sensitizing the general public that any form of violence against anyone is a crime and violation of human rights. The Government is also working with the Malawi Police Service which has set up Victim Support Units located in Police Stations throughout the country; and the Government is implementing the 2007 National Response to combat Gender Based Violence. Additionally, the enactment of the 2006 Prevention of Domestic Violence Act aims to eliminate gender-based violence occurring within the domestic arena; and to provide for effective legal remedies and other social services to persons affected by domestic violence.

15. There has been the recruitment of Child Protection Officers who have been deployed across Malawi who are working as watchmen for children to make sure that their rights are not violated.

16. Facilitation of engendering of policies in the general public, private and Non-Governmental-Sectors such as Land Policy, Transport Policy, Reproductive Health Policy, HIV and AIDS Policy and the Re-admission Policy among others have also taken place.

Chairperson,

17. While Malawi like other countries in southern Africa are signatories to regional and international conventions aiming at empowering women at all levels economically and in making decisions, however, the country still has challenges on the way to empower women, most of who reside in the rural areas of the country. Malawi therefore confirms its commitment to working toward all efforts aimed at addressing these challenges.

I thank you for your attention and God bless you.