



**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe  
To the United Nations**

**STATEMENT BY H. E. MR CHITSAKA CHIPAZIWA,  
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS, ON  
AGENDA ITEM 28 : ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since it is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor, I would like to extend my congratulations to you Mr. Chairman and your Bureau on your election to preside over the work of our Committee during this 67<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly. We are confident that with you at the helm of the Committee, we will be able to successfully accomplish all the work on the agenda. I would like to assure you and your Bureau of my delegation's utmost cooperation in the discharge of your duties.

Zimbabwe would like to align itself with the statements delivered by Cameroon and Algeria on behalf of the African Group and the G77 and China respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for the reports that he has submitted under this Agenda item. In particular, we are appreciative of the Secretary-General's reaffirmation of the catalytic role of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in mainstreaming gender. On our part, we take our membership in the CSW very seriously and we shall continue to work closely with the Commission as we promote the advancement of women in Zimbabwe especially on issues of gender equality and economic empowerment.

Mr. Chairman,

The advancement of women has been a key priority goal of my Government since independence and we are proud that we have made significant progress in gender equality and the empowerment of women. The women of Zimbabwe who constitute 52% of the population, had been largely marginalized by successive colonial governments in the areas of education,

health, human rights, economic empowerment and decision-making processes, it was therefore imperative that the enhancement and advancement of the status of women be considered as one of the key priority development goals of an independent Zimbabwe.

To demonstrate its commitment to the advancement of women, my Government signed and ratified a number of regional and international conventions, treaties, declarations and protocols on gender equality and the empowerment of women. These include the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on Civil and Political Rights; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development with its addendum on the Prevention and the Eradication of Violence against Women and Children; the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development as well as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Zimbabwe followed up these regional and international conventions and protocols by domesticating their requirements especially those of CEDAW through enacting several pieces of domestic legislation designed to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. Notable legislations adopted include the Legal Age of Majority Act of 1982; the Labour Relations Act of 1985; the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1985; the Sexual Discrimination Removal Act; the Sexual Offences Act of 2001; the Domestic Violence Act of 2007; the National Gender Policy of 2004 and the National Gender Policy Implementation Strategy and Work Plan for 2008 – 2012. The National Gender Policy provides guidelines and the institutional framework to engender all sectoral policies, programmes and projects and activities at all levels of the society and economy. In 1995, the Government created the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development to oversee coordination of all gender programmes and to facilitate gender mainstreaming in all sector ministries. Moreover, Zimbabwe's women can inherit wealth and ascend to traditional chieftaincies without gender hindrances.

Mr. Chairman,

On the political front, Zimbabwe has also made considerable progress in implementing the provisions of the stand alone SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and become one of the pioneers in the region in terms of enhancing women's full participation in the governance and political institutions of society such as the Parliament and the judiciary. As part of this effort, the Government of Zimbabwe is working to address the yawning gaps in gender representation in governance and political institutions of the country. In this regard, the Government continues to promote proportional representation for women in Parliament as a way of politically empowering them. Political parties in Zimbabwe have adopted a quota system which has seen an increase in women's representation in politics even though this is still below the 30% quota set by the African Union and the 50% gender parity set in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

Mr. Chairman,

Zimbabwe welcomes the Secretary-General's report on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women. While domestic violence is a social ill that continues to inflict immeasurable social costs in Zimbabwean society, Zimbabwe has made strides to eliminate violence against women and this was done through the legislation of the Domestic Violence Act in 2007. However, pervasive inequalities still exist and we feel that a lot still needs to be done to achieve our targets and as such we welcome increased cooperation with our partners as we strive to meet our goals within the framework of the MDGs, especially MDG 3 and 5. I should like to emphasize that initiatives targeted at advancing the status of women must not neglect the role of men in the achievement of this goal. We welcome the continuation and increase of campaigns for the eradication of domestic violence that are particularly targeted at the male audience.

Mr. Chairman,

On the economic front, the Government of Zimbabwe has instituted a number of affirmative action programmes meant to economically empower women. As part of its ongoing commitment to empower women, on 19 July 2012, the Government of Zimbabwe launched the Broad Based Women's Economic Empowerment Framework (BBWEE) which is a medium-term development plan whose principal objective is that of gender equality and the empowerment of women in all sectors of the national economy. The framework outlines key strategies on how to fully integrate women in the

entire value chain of the economic sectors in line with the Indigenization and Empowerment Act as well as other regional and international gender mainstreaming instruments such as the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development as well as CEDAW. The Government of Zimbabwe has strong political will to ensure the successful implementation of the framework at all levels and in all parts of the country.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Zimbabwe recently introduced the Gender Responsive Economic Policy Management Initiative (GEPMI) whose goal is to equip local policy makers, economists, budget officers and other development practitioners with the expertise and ability to mainstream gender aspects into economic development policy formulations. Zimbabwe is proud to be among the first five African states to introduce the initiative and we are confident that it will go a long way in overcoming gender imbalances in our national economic development.

Mr. Chairman,

Since independence, the Government of Zimbabwe has regarded education as a critical and essential empowerment tool for women and great strides have been made in ensuring that women, especially the girl child, receive the education that they deserve. Education enables women to develop the necessary skills that are vital for the management and success of their business enterprises.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Zimbabwe commends the support being extended to it by various stakeholders and partners in its effort to advance the status of women in the country. In particular, we commend UN agencies especially UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA for their programmes in the area of women empowerment. Equally commendable is the work of local NGOs, civil society organizations and donors. My delegation would like to make it clear that the Government of Zimbabwe remains committed to working with all stakeholders who genuinely share the Government's noble goal of empowering the women of Zimbabwe. Though there are some coordination challenges between the Government and the stakeholders, the Government of Zimbabwe is working on a National Women's Council Bill which will put

in place a clearly coordinated and harmonized framework to advance women issues with all stakeholders in the country.

Mr. Chairman,

The positive strides made by the Government of Zimbabwe in advancing the status of women notwithstanding, there are multiple hurdles which are confronting us. These include lack of access to credit facilities and this is worse for rural women entrepreneurs. The majority of women entrepreneurs often struggle to access funds from local financial institutions because of lack of collateral security. Access to credit enables women entrepreneurs to finance and also diversify their entrepreneurial activities.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, we want to stress that no hurdles will force my Government to push the empowerment of women to the periphery of its development goals. Instead, the Government of Zimbabwe will redouble its resolve to empower women and ensure gender equality. Efforts will continue to be made to resolve all the challenges facing women's empowerment. We are determined to ensure that the women of Zimbabwe contribute to the country's economic growth, development and general sustainable advancement. As co-liberators of their country from brutal colonialism, our women deserve no less than parity with their menfolk in all spheres of life.

I thank you.