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STATEMENT

BY

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ACTING PERMANENT SECRETARY

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

ON

OCEANS, SEAS, FORESTS AND BIODIVERSITY

AT THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SDGs

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Mr. Co- Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Southern African group of countries namely Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and my country Zambia as a contribution on this thematic area of Oceans and *seas, forests* and *biodiversity*. I wish to align this statement to the Group of 77 and China's statement delivered by the distinguished Deputy Permanent Representative of Bolivia, to the statement of the Africa group delivered by the Ambassador of Guinea as well as the statement delivered by the Distinguished Ambassador of Benin for the LDCs.

Mr. Co- Chair,

I wish to thank the panellists for their presentations and also the secretariat for the TST briefs that are very informative. I wish to state from the outset that, Oceans, Seas and forests are important aspects of our Natural Resources whose contribution to the social, economic and environmental development cannot be overemphasised. Furthermore, in addition to being important components to sustainable development, they have a positive impact on poverty reduction.

The countries in the Southern African Group are aware of the *challenges posed* by climate change, desertification and land degradation, drought, flood, loss of biodiversity, management of waste and chemicals, coastal erosion, marine pollution, rising sea levels which affect most of the developing countries sustainable development implementation. The negative effects are exacerbated mainly by increased vulnerability, social, economic and environmental cost for adaptation and mitigation. Therefore the efforts of the future Sustainable Development Goals should seek to have an integrated approach to address the current and emerging challenges. Further there is need for exploring financing options while at the same time enhance capacities to developing as well as least developed countries to adopt technologies, measures and implement policies for sustainable exploitation and use of these natural resources.

Due to the importance of these resources, it is imperative therefore that they be reflected in the sustainable development and in the post 2015 Development Agenda.

Mr. Co. Chair,

With regard to forests sector, observation has been that the value of forest and forest products in the national economy are mostly underestimated or excluded altogether. Due to its presumed low contribution at macroeconomic level, the forestry sector has not been regarded as an important element in the development processes of most countries in the region as compared to other sectors of the economy such as mining, manufacturing, tourism or agriculture. This is compounded by the fact that many forest products and services that are consumed do not enter into the market economy and are often not reported in GDP calculations. Therefore, when determining the contribution of forests to poverty reduction, based on financial parameters, a large component is often left out. It is imperative therefore,

that targets and indicators to facilitate renewed focus on sustainable development and management of forests, as well as correct measure of its contribution to the economy are well reflected in the framework of a future sustainable development goal.

Mr. Co- Chair,

Countries in the Southern African Group recognize that the current targets under MDG 7 are limited in nature as they do not adequately cover other important facets that Forests provide and contribute to Environmental, Economic and Social dimensions. There are a number of instruments and strategies that contain a set of important and measurable indicators that the region has recognized and are in some cases implementing. The indicators contained in these instruments and strategies pertaining to sustainable forest management can only be visibly and tangibly reported if they are strengthened in the broader framework of sustainable development.

Mr. Co- Chair,

The region is party to most of the internationally and regionally agreed strategies and instruments whose effective implementation hinges on future sustainable development and an inclusive post 2015 development agenda that will provide room for effective reporting on the contributions of the sector.

Let me take this opportunity to emphasize on some of these action plans, strategies and instruments in which most work has been done to elaborate implementation, progress and existing gaps: The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) through adoption by the General Assembly has agreed on a Non Legally Binding Instrument on all Types of Forest (NLBI) which contains actions at all levels to promote Sustainable Forest Management. This Forest Instrument includes four Global Objectives on Forests and out of these, the objectives of enhancing forest benefits and their contributions to internationally agreed development goals; increasing the area of sustainably managed forests, and the reversal in the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management are to some extent covered by other MDGs and not MDG 7. The Forest Instrument has incorporated a myriad of indicators from other processes such as the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and Forest Resources Assessment (FRA). The instrument also embodies, as a reference framework, the seven thematic elements for sustainable forest management.

FRA is the only comprehensive global C & I process covering all Member States of the Forum while ITTO's C & I counts with the participation of over 60 countries, the majority of which are developing countries. The indicators from these two processes appear to be the most applicable for reporting on the forest instrument not inclusively covered by the set of targets in the current MDG 7.

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for 2011-2020: has targets of halving deforestation and the loss of other natural habitats by 2020; restoration of 15% of degraded lands by 2020; sustainably managed areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry as well as safeguarding essential ecosystems and social equity. These targets are essential to reporting in order to

enhance Sustainable Forest Management. The current scope of targets under MDG 7 does not adequately cover these targets and their associated indicators.

Although future detailed discussion on climate change are referred to the UNFCCC future outcome, reference to mitigation efforts where countries are required to report on emissions and enhancing removals from Land use and Land-use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) under the National Communications Report to the UNFCCC. The indicators under LULUCF are significantly important to show efforts that countries are putting in to enhance Sustainable Forest Management. The other UNFCCC mechanism to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation and to enhance forest carbon stocks (REDD+) provides a unique opportunity to reverse the on-going trend of deforestation and degradation of forests and improve sustainable forest management in tropical forest countries. To implement national REDD+ strategies, prioritising actions and indicators of addressing deforestation and forest degradation will have to be developed to support national efforts and commitments. REDD+ strategy implementation will require a landscape approach and as such the targets under MDG 7 do not adequately cover the broader and crosscutting indicators that will have to be reported to enhance sustainable forest management.

In the close view on matters of desertification under UNCCD there is need to report on Impact indicators such as “Land cover status and the population proportion in affected areas living above the poverty line”. These are issues currently not adequately covered by the target scope under MDG 7. Some countries in the region are currently conducting National wide Forest Inventories and Forests livelihood Economic Surveys which will make available statistics to inform the impact indicators under the UNCCD.

Other examples on the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Process under NEPAD, the SADC Protocols on Wildlife Law Enforcement and Forestry and the most recently, the SADC Forestry Strategy, have all clearly recognized the strategic and practical importance of international community and regional efforts to boost intra-regional trade in Forest products and reduce any potential disputes between major producers and importing countries. The goals should ensure that agreements and initiatives do not unnecessarily restrict trade and impose conditionalities for developing countries on matters of definition of trade products for instance. This has a regional and country effect in promoting Sustainable Forest Management. Some countries in the region have adopted the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) process of preventing and regulating illegal timber exports and imports. The FLEGT process has strategies and indicators whose contribution is not clearly reflected in the current MDG 7.

Mr. Co- Chair,

Many countries in the region have identified inadequate technology and weak technological innovation and infrastructure capacities for sector development, apart from need for policy implementation improvement and forest governance. These could target improvements in the application of forest laws and capacity for law enforcement, establishing clear and equitable land tenure and user rights, and developing systems for monitoring performance and improving accountability at national and local levels.

Regarding matters of bio diversity and ecosystems, these are essential to human wellbeing and also critical to the Earth’s life support system on which the welfare of current and future generations depend. The countries in the Southern African Group agree with the fact that the

loss and degradation of biodiversity impact negatively on all people, and also that, the impacts are particularly severe, and more immediate on the poor and vulnerable, women, children and indigenous peoples.

Due to a variety of sectors covered and impacted by the benefits and loss of biodiversity and ecosystems, it is therefore important that biodiversity is considered as a cross cutting aspect with specific targets in different key sector goals. The Group is of the view that consideration be given to issues on land use, land degradation, overexploitation of natural resources, pollution, invasive alien species, climate change and ocean acidification. Overall, sustainable patterns of consumption and production is undermined by loss of biodiversity and the ecosystems putting the planet at risk and the functioning of the Earth's support system. Therefore mechanisms and integration of these matters by way of targets and indicators is important.

In light of all the pertinent issues raised, I wish to state that the region supports the proposal for a cross-cutting integrated goal focusing on *sustainable development of land, forests, oceans and environmental protection.*" We support the proposal that means of implementation should be an integral part of this cross cutting goal, and we emphasize the need for support of development partners, which is critical to adaptation and mitigation in our countries. Further we urge that these issues be integrated into national development plans for effective implementation.

I thank you.