



# REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



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**STATEMENT**

**DELIVERED BY**

**MR. CHOLA CHABALA**

**ACTING PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF FINANCE**

**ON THE**

**THEME: PROMOTING EQUALITY, INCLUDING SOCIAL EQUITY,  
GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

**AT THE**

**EIGHTH SESSION OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

**3<sup>RD</sup>-7<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2014**

**NEW YORK**

Mr. Co Chair,

I wish to thank you for giving me the floor. It is my honour to speak on behalf of the Southern Africa Group of countries which also belong to SADC, namely Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Zimbabwe and my country Zambia on this important subject. Our group aligns itself with the Statements made by the Ambassador of Bolivia for the Group of 77 and China and the Africa Group statement made by the Ambassador of Guinea.

I wish to thank the panel for their presentations and the Secretariat for the Issues Brief on 'Promoting Equality, Including Social Equity, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment'.

The southern Africa group is cognizant that gender equity and eliminations of all forms of inequalities is fundamental towards attainment sustainable development. In short, Sustainable Development and also Poverty eradication will not be fully achieved if gender inequalities, social iniquities and lack of women empowerment continue to dominate the social fibre of our societies. Some progress and success in this line has been recorded overtime, unfortunately fourteen years of implementing the MDGs for instance, the goals 4 and 5 remains a challenge for many countries including southern Africa. There is a great need therefore to come up with better strategies and mechanisms to contribute towards their acceleration and attain success in the future development agenda. I believe this is an opportune time when we gather to define the SDG goals.

Mr. Co Chair,

With regard to the issue of promoting Gender equality and women empowerment in the region, I wish to remind the meeting that in 2008, SADC Heads of States and Government adopted SADC Protocol on Gender that called upon member States to provide for the empowerment of women, to eliminate discrimination and to achieve gender equality and equity through the development and implementation of gender responsive legislation, policies, programmes and projects. The SADC Gender protocol further seeks to harmonise the various international, continental and regional gender equality instruments that SADC Member States have subscribed to, such as, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Declaration and its Platform of Action, The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, CSW agreed Conclusions and the Millennium Development goals(MDGs) amongst others.

Four strategic areas form the basis of the SADC Gender Protocol. These are: Gender Mainstreaming, Women in Politics and decision-making, Gender Based Violence and women economic empowerment. Women's participation in decision making has been identified as critical to sustainable development. Women in Southern Africa are largely underrepresented in decision making at Executive, Legislative and Local Government levels. For instance the average for women Cabinet Ministers in the region has increased from 22 percent to 24 percent in the last few years. The average percentage for Women Parliamentarians is at 23.4 percent. SADC Protocol on Gender and Development obliges its member states to reach at least 50 percent women representation in all decision making positions by 2015. This is according to the target set in 2005 and signed for by SADC Heads of State and Government through the SADC Protocol on Gender.

However, it must be noted that between 2005 and 2011, women representation in Parliament in our group of countries increased by an average of 4 percent whereas the global average of women in parliament increased from 16 percent to 19 percent during the same period. At local government level, women representation increased from 22 to 23 percent.

Mr. Co Chair,

Gender based violence is known to be widespread in our region and presents a major obstacle to attaining gender equality and equity. Gender Based Violence covers domestic violence, sexual harassment in the workplace, human trafficking and sexual and emotional abuse to name a few examples. When referring to Gender Based Violence our countries recognises that the discussion is not just about the act of violence, but also about education and prevention, as well as victim assistance. According to the 2011 SADC Gender Protocol Barometer, 11 Member States have adopted legislation that deals with domestic violence. For instance, Angola is developing or adopting National Action Plans to end Gender Based Violence. Many of the Member States are considered to be a source, destination and transit point for women and children subjected to sex and labour trafficking. To date, seven States in our group have adopted legislation related to human trafficking. The main challenge is inadequate skills and infrastructure to conduct forensic research in order to have evidence based

Mr. Co Chair,

The slow progress in the four core areas alluded to requires further attention. There is a great urgency, therefore, as the international community to work together to support the achievement of already set goals and internationally acceptable gender equity numbers and policies that protect women from all forms of violence and disempowerment. We need now renewed efforts and commitments to attain gender equality and women empowerment. The countries in our group believes that the SDG process is an important platform to define measures on how to accelerate progress.

Mr. Co Chair

Our group reiterates that discussions on gender equality, social iniquities and women empowerment are incomplete without the discussion of sexual reproductive health and reproductive rights for all women which should be in line with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Programme of Action and the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millenium Development Goals, and all relevant agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women. Maternal health is critical towards poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development. Women and Girls have a right to have access to health care services that promote their wellbeing. Limited access to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health, and specifically timely access to high-quality emergency obstetric care, cause high levels maternal morbidities, as well as maternal mortality. These discussions should of course be done with full respect for national laws, polices and development priorities of each member state, and by adhering to the already internationally agreed policies on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. This discussion is critical as the international community defines the SDGs in order to have a balanced integration of these matters in sustainable development as well as the post 2015 Development Agenda.

I thank you.