

*Please check against delivery*



**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**H.E. Mr. Daniel António  
Permanent Representative of Mozambique  
to the United Nations**

**On Behalf**

**OF THE AFRICAN GROUP**

**At the**

**General Debate**

**OF THE**

**55<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE  
STATUS OF WOMEN**

**NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2011**

**Mr. Chairman,**

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.

The African Group aligns itself fully with the statement made by the delegation of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, allow me to extend our warm congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, and to all other members of the Bureau, on your unanimous election to preside over this session, and pledge the full support of the African Group in the accomplishment of your noble task of steering the proceedings of the 55<sup>th</sup>.session of the CSW to a successful conclusion.

We commend the Secretary General for his report contained in document E/CN.6/2011/3, which provides a comprehensive examine of the critical issue of women's and girl's access to and participation in science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to employment and decent work.

While noting that encouraging progress is reported in advancing women's participation in science and technology, and even women domination in some sub-field of science, particularly life science, we are still concerned with the fact that they continue to be underrepresented in other important fields of economic development such as computing, engineering, manufacturing and construction.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Recognizing the essential role women play in African national economies, specially in agriculture where they count for more than half of food crops production, as well as in household responsibility and community management, the African Group is of the view that ensuring women's and girl's access to science and technology knowledge and skills is an economic imperative.

Indeed, to address food security crisis that affected more 44 million people lastly and to feed 9 billion people in 2050, we need the active and equal participation of women.



Looking at the pressing nature of the development challenges facing Africa in particular, we fully agree with the Secretary General when he argues that policymakers have a key role to play in integrating a gender perspective in science, technology and innovation policies.

But the adoption of good policies and gender mainstreaming cannot in itself bring the necessary changes in society. Policy cannot in itself reposition the role of women, as the equals to men, to participate more actively in poverty eradication and sustainable development efforts.

Instead, building women's scientific and technical capacity in Africa can only help them achieve a better and more efficient performance to contribute fully to economic growth, if economic and social infrastructure and institutions are adequately equipped and funded, including through transfer of technology and technical assistance.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In the past decades much progress has been made in Africa in expanding access to basic education for girls.

Nevertheless, a lot is still to be done in order to make science and technology attractive to women. Weak institutional and technical capacity is also a challenge in Africa, while the severe impact of the multiple economic and financial crisis, as well as food and energy crisis continue to hamper African efforts to development and poverty eradication.

It is worthy to note that, the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the Protocol to the Africa Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa of 2003, and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa provide a fundamental framework policy for the African commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Indeed, since the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on Status of Women, the African countries have continued to provide leadership in championing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment through its ground breaking commitments.



In this regard, important legal frameworks have been established in Africa to meaningfully address the challenge of the access to and participation of women in science and technology.

The First African Union Conference of African Women in Science and Technology, held in Johannesburg in August 2007, expressed clearly that women are a resource that could be used towards social and economic development of the continent, through participating in science and technology programs. The meeting aimed mainly at addressing under-representation of African women in science, mathematics and engineering fields, and also considered and endorsed a proposal to establish a continental association under the auspices of the African Union.

Furthermore, the Second Decade of education for Africa (2006-2015), calls for a greater participation of women in science and technology at all levels, including higher education.

By adopting the ever AU Gender Policy in 2009 and going further to declare an African Women's Decade 2010-2020, and the launching of the fund for African Women, the African countries showed unchallenged commitment and leadership in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Moreover, while the African Union is proud to adopt a continental Gender Policy, it is fully sensitized of the huge implementation challenges due to weak institutional and technical capacities at national as well as regional levels.

Therefore, we strongly believe that the combination of pro-women legislation; investing in girls' education; women training in professional skills; promoting women access to science and technology will enable women to significantly contribute to the efforts towards poverty reduction and achievement of sustainable development of the African Continent.

A renewed international commitment to the transfer of technology and technical assistance to developing countries, in particular to the African

continent is of crucial importance to enabling the effective implementation of policies and strategies on gender equality and empowerment of women.

Indeed, these are challenges that can not be successfully addressed by one country alone. The struggle for women's empowerment, leadership development, international peace and security require full commitment not just from governments, but equally from all stakeholders, including civil society organizations and the private sector.

This is why the priority theme of the 55<sup>th</sup>. Session of the Commission on the status of Women:" Access and participation of women and girls in education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women equal access to full employment and decent work" is so important in the efforts for gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In conclusion, the African Group takes note of the recommendations contained in the Secretary General's report and reiterates its readiness to fully collaborate with the Commission on the Status of Women towards the achievement of consensual, realistic and action oriented conclusions as the main outcome of the deliberations of the current cycle of the Commission.

I thank you for your attention!