



MALAWI

STATEMENT

BY THE DELEGATION OF MALAWI ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

ON AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN, AT THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. President,

Since I am speaking for the first time during this session, please permit me, on behalf of the African Group and indeed on behalf of my own delegation of Malawi to congratulate you and your Bureau for the excellent manner in which you are conducting these meetings.

The African Group aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of ~~Malaysia~~ ^{Yemen} on behalf of the G77 and China.

The African Group notes the strong and comprehensive commitments made by the international community on gender equality and women's rights. The Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women recognized that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty. Furthermore, during the Millennium Summit in 2000, Governments committed themselves to promote gender equality and empowerment of women as effective ways of combating poverty, hunger and disease, as well as to stimulate development that is truly sustainable. The Millennium Development Goals which were subsequently adopted included one goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women, with targets relating to employment, education and participation in all respects of development.

Mr. President,

The rights of African women have been given great importance with the entering into force of 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). The introduction of other initiatives, such as, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (2001) and the Solemn Declaration of African Heads of States on Gender Equality (2004) also enhance regional perspectives on women's rights. These instruments provide the basis for holding governments accountable for advancing the status of women in their respective countries.

Mr President,

While African Women's marginalization is rooted in the historical, political and socio-cultural context of Africa's development, some improvements and successes are evident, such as, increased employment opportunities; nonetheless, the substance and pace of change have not been executed with the momentum and urgency required to advance Africa's present stage of development to the desired level. .

In trying to boost women's economic participation and their empowerment, the 12th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in 2009, in Addis Ababa adopted the decision to declare 2010 -2020 as the African Women's Decade. The main objective of the African Women's Decade is to re-invigorate commitments to accelerated implementation of

agreed global and regional commitments of gender equality and women empowerment. This decade will be launched on 15 October 2010 in Kenya.

During this decade, special focus will be on the following ten themes:

- Fighting Poverty and Promoting Economic Empowerment of Women and Entrepreneurship;
- Agriculture and Food Security; Health, Maternal Mortality and HIV&AIDS; Education, Science and Technology;
- Environment and Climate Change; Peace and Security and Violence Against Women;
- Governance and Legal Protection; Finance and Gender Budgets; Women In Decision Making positions; and
- Young Women's Movements.

To strengthen these efforts, the AU Assembly further announced the establishment of the African Fund for Women, to support the implementation of the various initiatives and protocols which have been ratified by African countries. Resources from the fund would go to a series of capacity building activities the AU plans to hold to help member states implement women's rights as enshrined in the various policy instruments.

Mr. President,

The African Group welcomes the adoption of the resolution and subsequent launch of the UN Global Plan of Action to combat trafficking in Persons. We view the Plan of Action as a timely development that will go a long way to protect women and children. Member States of my Group pledge to cooperate with the UN and other Partners in combating trafficking in persons.

Mr. President,

Allow me to applaud on behalf of my Group, the creation of UN Women and the appointment of Ms Michelle Bachelet as its Executive Director. The African Group hopes that the adequate and predictable resources will be availed to the new gender entity so that it delivers better results for women, particularly at the country level.

In conclusion, Mr. President, to borrow a powerful phrase from the African Union Gender Policy Rev 4 of May 22, 2009, "the aspiration for equality between men and

women largely reflects on good governance in Africa. Men and women should be the socio- economic-political glue for the integration of the African continent." Having said that, I wish to reaffirm the African Group's commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

I thank you for your attention.