



Statement on behalf of SADC

By Mrs. Esther Mcheka-Chilenje Nkhoma

Charge d'Affairs, a.i.

Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Malawi,

On ITEM 28: Advancement of women

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Mr. Chairman,
Excellences,
Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) namely: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi.

SADC aligns itself with the statement delivered by Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. SADC also aligns itself with the statement delivered by Cameroon on behalf of the African Group.

The SADC would like to thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive reports provided on this agenda item with special emphasis on violence against women and girls.

This issue is of great importance to our region. That's why it is incorporated as a stand-alone chapter in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development that was adopted by our Heads of State at their Summit in 2008. The ambitious SADC Protocol on Gender and Development regional instrument outlines 28 targets that are to be reached by 2015. It has five articles in its chapter on gender based violence. One of the targets is to reduce by half the current level of Gender Based Violence by 2015.

In addition, the Protocol calls on member states to among others, enact as well as enforce legislation that prohibits all forms of gender based violence; ensure that such laws on gender based violence provides for the comprehensive testing, treatment and care of survivors of sexual assault; enact and adopt specific legislation provisions to prevent human trafficking and provide for holistic services to the victims with the aim of reintegrating them into society; enact legislation, adopt and implement policies and strategies, programs which define and prohibit sexual harassment in all spheres; and provide deterrent sanctions for perpetrators of sexual harassment.

Mr. Chairman,

I am happy to report to this august gathering that many SADC member states have or are in the process of reviewing their respective constitutions to align themselves with the existing provisions of the conventions and protocols. Currently 12 of the 14 member states of the SADC have in place domestic violence laws and 11 have integrated National Action Plans that address gender based violence. This is also true of human trafficking, where several SADC member states have enacted or are in the process of enacting legislation to prevent this scourge in the region, with many incorporating the provision in the trafficking of persons laws. Additionally, the provisions on

comprehensive treatment for survivors of gender based violence including the post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is available in nine countries while some make the provision available to health workers. Nine of the SADC member states have laws on sexual assault, up from seven in 2009. On the provision of enacting legislation on sexual harassment, eight of the 14 SADC member states have legislation that specifically deals and mentions it while five have incorporated the offense into other laws.

While there is evidence that the SADC region is doing well on issues pertaining to gender based violence, there are gaps remaining between policy and implementation. To address these challenges, SADC is working with NGOs and other stake holders in the private sector especially in the area of service delivery. This is especially for accessible, affordable and specialized legal services for the survivors of Gender Based Violence. SADC also works with these sectors in providing specialized facilities that include places of shelter and safety for the survivors.

Mr. Chairman,

SADC upholds the fact that the education and training of women and girls is the key for their emancipation, empowerment, effective participation and professional advancement. It is also a vital tool for the campaign to bring to an end to violence against women and girls. It is in this regard that SADC welcomes the forged partnerships between the UN Women and Duksung University of Korea and ESWA Women University in support of the Africa Young Women's Leadership Programme through scholarships. We welcome this initiative and also encourage the UN Women Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director, madam Michelle Bachelet, to continue consulting with other relevant United Nations entities, partners, private sector and other relevant stakeholders to find ways that would prepare women for leadership through special trainings and higher level education.

Globally the gross enrollment rate of girls in primary schools is at 96%, in Sub-Saharan Africa is at 92%. At secondary school level, enrollment rate globally is at 97%, Sub Saharan Africa is at 79%. The overall literacy levels are estimated at 90% globally, 92% Sub-Saharan African. There is need therefore to ensure that the girl child completes her education and that women in general have increased access to technological and vocational training for their participation in job creation that would inherently give them economic independence.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the vital role of the media in the region in combating gender based violence. To this end, SADC and stakeholders have endeavored to train and sensitize the media. This is especially during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, which starts in mid November and culminates with activities, including media coverage of the 16-Days in the various media outlets throughout the region. It is through increased training that the media in our region would play an even increased role in the fight against gender based violence.

Mr. Chairman,

Permit me before I proceed to speak briefly about my own country Malawi. One of the components of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, is the provision calling for 50 percent representation in all decision making positions. To this effect I am glad to inform this gathering that for the first time in the history of SADC, since April this year, Malawi now has a female Head of State and Government, Her Excellency the President Mrs. Joyce Banda. Her Excellency the President Mrs. Joyce Banda is the second woman to become president in Africa. Let me also mention that women's representation in parliament is also increasing with each election.

The Government of Malawi is fully committed to the implementation of the international protocols and conventions on the rights of women and the girl-child and works in collaboration with numerous stakeholders to work towards bringing to an end violence against women and girls.

Malawi is among 125 countries that has outlawed domestic violence through the enactment of the Protection against (Prevention of) Domestic Violence Act in 2006. To address violence against women and its consequences, Government of Malawi is also implementing the National Response Gender Based Violence Programme, Community Safety and Security: Justice for Women and Children, 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence, Child Protection Programme among others.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, to sustainably bring to an end gender based violence and bring about women's advancement everywhere, there is need to strengthen collaboration and cooperation between Member States and development partners, donors, academia, researchers, civil society organizations, community leaders, and women and girls themselves. Scaling up investment in gender equality and women's empowerment is essential for making progress on all the goals and for donors to fulfill commitments in the campaign to end gender based violence.

I thank you for your attention.