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## **STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HON. DOREEN SIOKA  
MINISTER OF GENDER EQUALITY & CHILD WELFARE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**AT THE**

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

**New York  
24 February 2011**



**Chairperson**

**Honorable Ministers**

**Participants**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

On behalf of my delegation I wish to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau for steering the work of this session. My delegation looks forward to the fruitful outcome of this session and wishes to assure you of our full cooperation and support. Allow me also to congratulate Madam Michelle Bachelet on her position .

Namibia aligns itself with the statements made by Argentina on behalf of the group of 77 and China, Mozambique on behalf of the African Group as well as that of the SADC Group.

My delegation would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the reports submitted on the priority theme, which will facilitate our discussions.

**Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen**

Namibia recognizes that educational choices and achievements affect and determine the employment opportunities of men and women alike, their individual and family well-being. As such the Government continues to prioritize education and training during the budget process, giving particular attention to the fact that more girls than boys enroll in primary and secondary school.

Since Independence in 1990, Namibia introduced various measures to decentralize the provision and delivery of education services. The process of public sector reform as well as the introduction of strategies to improve the quality of education planning and management are ongoing.

Despite the high rate of enrolment of female learners at the primary and secondary education levels, factors such as inadequate prevention and management of teenage pregnancies, lack of proper nutrition, and economic pressure on young girls from family, remains a challenge, resulting in the low retention rate of girls to boys.

To address such challenges, the Education Sector Policy for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy is in force, to allow young girls to continue with their education during pregnancy and after birth. The school feeding program supplements the often poor diets of primary school pupils whose performance at school is negatively affected by hunger.

### **Chairperson**

With regard to tertiary institutions, statistics show that females outnumber males in relation to the enrollment rates with an increasing number of females enrolled for male dominated fields. In fact, in 2008, female students enrolled in the science and technology field in tertiary institutions increased by 50% as compared to 2004.

However, the situation at the Vocational Training Centers (VTC) indicates that more males than females enroll in VTCs country wide and a number of male students dominate in the most economically viable subjects. For example, females attending VTCs are mainly enrolled for the newly introduced feminine subjects such as hairdressing, hospitality and tourism.

To rectify these gender imbalances in tertiary education, different strategies have been put in place. These include encouraging young girls who qualify to study at tertiary institutions, to enroll for science and commercial courses by offering them scholarship to study at different institutions.

### **Chairperson,**

In conclusion, for girls and women living in poverty, education is not only the key to a brighter future but it is also the key to survival. Secondary school is a critical period in girls' and boys' lives. This is where they start their lives and to imagine and decide their futures, as well as to begin to form opinions on what they want to become in life.

Therefore, we must strengthen our student's preparation for entering fields in science and technology, especially for women and young girls, and address the current gender gap in science and technology so that girls are well-prepared for opportunities in the new fields of science and technology.

While having the floor Mr. Chairperson, I wish to take this opportunity to announce that the sixth (VI) Spain-Africa International Meeting will be held in Windhoek, Namibia on 9-10 April 2011, under the logo “Women for a better World” – seeking solutions to the impact of the economic crisis on gender.

I thank you

