



**STATEMENT  
BY**

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WITH DISABILITIES  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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

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*Check against delivery*



Chairperson,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of my delegation, I wish to commend you, Chairperson, and the Bureau for leading the Commission on the Status of Women at its 55<sup>th</sup> session. My delegation looks forward to a productive session and successful outcome and wishes to assure you of South Africa's full support and cooperation. South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Africa Group and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Group.

Chairperson

We welcome the establishment of "UN Women" as the penultimate body on women's empowerment and gender equality. We congratulate Ms Michelle Bachelet on her appointment as the first Executive Director of UN Women.

South Africa supports the Executive Director's priority to increase the equitable representation of women in decision-making positions in the UN system. At the national level, South Africa strives for 50/50 gender representation in all spheres and sectors of society. Currently, South Africa has 44 per cent women in Parliament, 43 per cent in Cabinet and 43 per cent in Local Government.

Chairperson

The South African Government has identified five key national priorities for 2009 to 2014. These are: Job creation, Health; Education; Fighting Corruption and Crime; and Rural Development, Land Reform and Food Security. The current theme of the Commission on the Status of Women finds resonance in these Government priorities.

South Africa further believes that access to education and training for women and girls is central to the eradication of poverty as it contributes to women's empowerment and gender equality. We believe that education and training afford women the ability to make meaningful choices in their lives and careers. We appreciate the contribution of the international private sector and philanthropy to the NEPAD projects on education and training. Such funding has also assisted in the areas of health care, sanitation and the building of schools in South Africa and other parts of Africa. We call on the international community to continue to support such efforts by developing countries to achieve the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Chairperson

In terms of South African law, it is compulsory for every child below 15 years to be at school. Government is implementing a programme entitled "Girls Education and Boys Education Movements" that focuses on educating girls and boys on gender equality issues. This programme is also supported by the private sector through collaborative projects such as Techno Girls where girls are exposed to the world of work and offered bursaries in science and technology sectors. Through the Techno Girls project, the country has seen an increase in the number of girls who graduate



in these fields. Government has also adopted various strategies to mainstream women in science, engineering and technology.

Chairperson

In order to reduce violence against women and girls, Government has re-introduced in 2010 the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS) units in all policing areas. These units are specialised investigations in the detection of all types of sexual offences, domestic violence and child abuse and protection cases. These units ensure effective access to justice for women and girls. These units are fully operational in all 176 policing areas country-wide. In addition, Forensic Social Workers are provided in all the units in order to assist women and girls in presenting admissible evidence in a court of law. By introducing these specialized units within the police service, Government has ensured that conviction rates are increased.

South Africa is proud of the global best practice, the Thuthuzela Care Centres, which is recognised by the United Nations as an excellent model to provide comprehensive one-stop services for survivors of Gender-Based Violence. A number of Member States such as Chile and Ethiopia, have adopted these models at their national levels.

Chairperson

The population of the rural areas in South Africa is predominantly women. The prioritization of rural development implies that Government treats the situation of women, who constitute the majority in rural areas, very seriously and is channeling more resources towards rural development. In 2007, South Africa hosted the Fourth

World Congress of Rural Women and we look forward to the upcoming Fifth World Congress for Rural Women, which is scheduled for October 2011 in India. International cooperation in strengthening the economic empowerment of rural women, through mobilization of resources and capacity-building must be prioritised. This will ensure that women in rural areas participate fully in decision-making processes and strengthen their contribution to the global economy, thereby improving the well-being of their families.

In conclusion Chairperson

South Africa reaffirms its commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Increased development assistance in the areas of education, health and job creation would contribute to the improvement of the quality of life and status of women around the world. Development, peace and human rights are inextricably linked and therefore, the plight of women and girls living under foreign occupation and conflict situations should be given priority attention.

I thank you