



STATEMENT

**BY H. E. HON. ANITTA KALINDE, MP, MINISTER OF
GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL WELFARE OF THE
REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**

ON

**BEHALF OF SADC MEMBER STATES AT THE
GENERAL DISCUSSION**

OF

**THE 57th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

NEW YORK, 06 MARCH 2013

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Madam Chairperson,

Your Excellencies Ministers for Gender and Women Affairs;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is an honour and privilege to deliver the statement on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States, namely. Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my own country, Malawi, at the 57th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Conference debate. I am pleased to note that the debate is focusing on the progress made and challenges faced in combating violence against women and girls; and in the implementation of legal instruments which promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Since I am taking the floor for the first time, allow me, to join the previous speakers in congratulating you and the members of the Bureau for the commendable work of the Commission on the Status of Women. We are confident that under your able leadership the session will be a success and will produce positive results that will contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of women and girls around the world on equal terms with men and boys.

SADC countries align themselves with the statements made by Fiji on behalf of Group of (G77) and China, and Chad on behalf of the African Group and express their full support to the Addis Ababa Declaration of the African

Union Ministers Responsible for Gender and Women Affairs, adopted on January 16, 2013

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports on the priority theme of "The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls".

Madam Chairperson,

SADC countries reaffirm the commitments made in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in the Programme of Action of International Conference on Population and Development, in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and those made by African countries in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples' and on Women's Rights in Africa.

At regional level we remain in efforts to fulfill the commitments set forth in the SADC Treaty and in particular the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, being the goal of the latter to halving the cases of gender-based violence by 2015.

The SADC treaty and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development instruments guide the definition and implementation of policies, adoption of legislation and programmes. The monitoring of the implementation of the instruments has served as the key indicator to measure the progress towards women's empowerment, gender parity, equality and equity.

Despite the tireless efforts to fully implement the instruments, SADC countries still experience high rates of gender-based violence, particularly

violence against women due to Poverty, HIV and AIDS and armed conflict at times, which are closely linked. The situation is exacerbated by gender inequality, harmful practices, beliefs, attitudes and patriarchal systems

We are concerned about armed conflicts that have been taking place and we condemn them, especially the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has resulted in sexual abuse where women are systematically raped and sex is being used as a weapon of war. We therefore, call upon the Security Council of the United Nations to accelerate the deployment of a brigade in order to neutralize and take corrective action to stop violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In order to strengthen measures to combat violence against women and girls, SADC member states intend to intensify the promotion of peace and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls during all forms of conflict and develop rehabilitation programs for perpetrators.

Madam Chairperson,

SADC recognizes that gender inequality occurs in the economic, social and political spheres. The situation is evidenced by low participation and representation of women in politics and decision-making positions, while in the social sphere women are engaged in unpaid reproductive work which contributes to a high rate of poverty affecting women in the SADC region.

The SADC countries recognize that it is a priority for the laws and policies to define clearly the need to combat all forms of violence, especially those perpetrated against women and girls in order to address the challenges

SADC Member States favour the development of campaigns at the highest level at individual and collective state levels, in order to address the underlying causes of violence against women. The campaigns need to involve and target families with a special focus on the socialization process.

SADC member States support the implementation of laws against domestic violence to end impunity, develop and strengthen programs and national action plans to deal with violence against women and girls all the time

In addition, there is a need to strengthen the monitoring of national, regional, and international commitments vis-à-vis women and girls for the continuous elimination of all harmful practices and gender stereotypes that perpetuate violence against women and girls in our countries.

Madam Chairperson,

SADC countries encourage the identification of good practices to combat violence against women and girls, especially those that focus on social transformation through prevention, protection and participation in programs, involving local governments, communities, traditional and grass roots institutions, faith-based organisations, religious leaders and the private sector

Community leaders must be actively involved in efforts to intensify and strengthen the initiatives towards combating violence against women and girls, in particular domestic violence in their communities, and grassroots organizations and religious leaders must be encouraged to play a vital role to

deal with the root causes of violence against women and girls in our countries.

Madam Chairperson,

We believe it is important to economically empower women in order to reduce their economic dependence on men and thus their vulnerability to violence.

SADC countries firmly believe that the promotion of women's equal access to justice, education, and legal protection are crucial aspects that should be considered in all spheres of society.

The development and implementation of policies and programs to ensure the recognition of the work carried out by caregivers, particularly within the context of HIV/AIDS, most of whom are women, including the allocation of resources and psychological support for care providers, are a priority to the SADC region.

The countries of the region stand for the expansion and strengthening of health systems infrastructure, including the availability of personnel and services for social and psychosocial support programs; and those for sexual and reproductive health and health rights, which are affordable for families affected by HIV and AIDS and other vulnerable groups.

Madam Chairperson,

We have made efforts in our region to implement programs that promote the involvement of men and boys in developing positive attitudes towards women to create and nurture behaviour aiming at good sexual health and

promotion of sharing of responsibilities between men and women with the view to eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV and gender-based violence.

The involvement of men in the provision of care and support for people living with HIV and AIDS, as well as the need for equal pay for work of equal value for both women and men should be also a priority.

Multi-sectorial approaches, including partnership with civil society organizations and networks of people living with HIV and AIDS, are one of the ways that the countries of the region have adopted and intend to strengthen in the provision of support services to vulnerable groups, especially orphaned and vulnerable children, people with disability, the elderly and widows.

Moreover, the region has prioritised the integration of a gender perspective into all the policies and programs on climate change to ensure a comprehensive response to the climate change agenda, such as strengthening the work on gender-budgeting. We hope that the programmes will result in adequate and appropriate allocation of budgets in our countries to address poverty, violence against women, the expansion of sexual and reproductive health-care services, HIV and AIDS and climate change, which are major priorities for the SADC region.

Despite the progress we have made, many challenges still remain. The ongoing devastating effects of the economic and financial crisis, the food and energy crisis and challenges posed by climate change have impacted immensely on our countries. Unemployment, poverty and hunger are some of the problems which disproportionately affect women and girls

Climate change increases the vulnerability of women and girls who are disproportionately affected by its impact due to the roles and responsibilities assigned to them based on gender, including limited access to resources, political participation, and legal rights.

SADC believes that the continuous empowerment of women, aimed at increasing their representation in political and decision-making bodies should continue.

SADC countries believe that effective coordination to the response on violence against women and gender mainstreaming in all the sectors, policies, plans and strategies can only be achieved with adequate funding for entities responsible for Women's Affairs, Gender and Children so that they can ensure effective coordination on issues related to combating violence against women and girls and gender mainstreaming activities.

I would like to conclude my remarks by reiterating the commitment of SADC countries to the achievement of an outcome that will translate into programs that will make a difference in eliminating violence from the lives of ordinary women and girls in our countries. As such, we are committed to the implementation of the decisions and recommendations that will come out from the CSW 57 event

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!