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STATEMENT

BY

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ON

**AGENDA ITEM 3(B) ON THE REVIEW OF RELEVANT
UNITED NATIONS PLANS**

AND

**PROGRAMMES OF ACTION PERTAINING TO THE
SITUATION OF SOCIAL GROUPS:**

- (i) TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL
YEAR OF THE FAMILY**
- (ii) EQUILIZATION OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES**
- (iii) MODALITIES FOR THE REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF
THE MADRID INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON
AGING, 2002**

New York
February 6, 2004

Mr. Chairman,

May I thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the agenda item 3 (b) on the Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of three key social groups namely the family, persons with disabilities and the Aged. May I also thank the Secretariat for the reports they have prepared on these issues, contained in documents E/CN.5/2004/3, E/CN.5/2004/4 and E/CN.5/2004/6, respectively. I also wish to thank the Rapporteur for his excellent report.

Mr. Chairman,

From the outset, I wish to state that my Government remains committed to the principles of social development, particularly those adopted by the Copenhagen Summit and other major UN Conferences. It is in this regard that my delegation finds the item under discussion today to be extremely important for its development goals. Zambia has been working hard to advance the implementation of its own national strategies and plans of action and those arising out of other Inter-Governmental Organizations in particular the United Nations. For the same reason, over the years, Zambia has been active in ensuring that this intergovernmental forum, the Commission for Social Development, is further strengthened.

Family

Mr. Chairman,

In the past ten years, the International Community, especially under the Commission for Social Development, has worked hard to draw attention to the many needs of the family and the central role that families play in our societies. The decade is now coming to a close and it is time to reflect on what has been done at the national, regional, and global levels. For this year, what my delegation wants to underscore are the achievements and outstanding challenges.

With respect to the family, Zambia enhanced the capacities of many households, by empowering older family members through the provision of social safety nets through micro finance and cooking and heating energy saving schemes. This has contributed to the overall strengthening of the family and the integration of gender into the main stream of development.

Further, Zambia recognizes the need to provide women with adequate postnatal leave days, without loss of seniority and remunerations. A large number of employers in the private sector are also following the government example in this direction.

Beyond Government, the civil society is actively engaged in programmes that support families. Some of the areas in which they work include, counseling, provision of legal advice and economic empowerment.

Mr. Chairman,

The report on the preparation for and observance of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (2004) has highlighted the importance of action at the national regional and international levels for the effective implementation of the issues pertaining to the family. At the national level, the report stressed the importance of the implementation of national programme of action, using advocacy and awareness rising. Through this approach Zambia has not only been able to highlight areas where families need support but has actually been able to provide the needed services and support within the confines of resource availability.

However, there are still areas where international support is urgently needed with respect to support for families. Zambia needs support in the areas of capacity building, in particular, developing indicators, statistics and new approaches to the development of family policies. In this context we would like to acknowledge the work of the Division for Social Policy and Development (DESA), which has been helpful to us, including the UN website on the family. UNICEF, FAO, ILO and the work of UNDP, has been equally helpful especially in delivering programmes focusing on children food security and poverty alleviation, all critical issued to the integrity and well-being of the family.

Mr. Chairman,

In this year of the observance of the tenth anniversary of the international year of the family, the international community needs to recommit itself to the family by increasing resources available in the UN trust fund on family activities.

Disabilities

Mr. Chairman

The Rapporteur has presented this 42nd session of the Commission for Social Development with a report on the suggested Supplement to the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. Firstly my delegation would like to commend the special Rapporteur for his work in the overall area pertaining to the situation of social groups.

The situation of the disabled cuts across human rights, economic and social issues as well as the conflicts affecting the region. Policies and solutions to tackle the problems of the disabled therefore has to be broad based covering all these areas. Clearly Zambian efforts alone would never be enough to address the

many needs of the disabled persons in the country. International support is therefore very much required in this area.

Mr. Chairman,

The suggested Supplement to the Standard Rules is relevant to the whole question of support of persons with disabilities. The supplement covers new area and revisits some of existing Standard Rules. My delegation supports the Supplement. It is our view however, that the actual consensus on them can only emerge in the context of intergovernmental consultations at this very session. While we realise that it might not be possible for the Commission to agree on every rule in the supplement suggested by the special Rapporteur, we would like to see every effort undertaken by this Commission to move forward on the basis of the existing Standard Rules.

Mr. Chairman,

At the same time we would like to emphasize that the existing Standard Rules are far from being fully implemented and should still remain our focus in the interim. My delegation looks forward to the consultations on the suggested supplements.

Aging

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation welcomes the report on the Modalities for the review and appraisal of the Madrid International plan of Action on Ageing. My delegation considers the review modalities to be important not just for the sake of searching for an efficient follow up system for the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), on this subject, but really, to put in place a mechanism that allows governments in particular to move forward with effective implementation of the programme at the micro-level.

Mr. Chairman,

The approach suggested in the documents before us is important in as far as it tries to link policy formulation to operations. A bottom-up approach is useful in as far as it ensures that policy is supported by data and expressed priorities of the intended beneficiaries, in this regard the aged. We would however like to caution that the bottom-up approach does not unduly trap governments and or the implementing partners in an endless circle of surveys, mini surveys, watchdog groups and monitoring groups. We believe that focus should be on attaining the data needed in the shortest possible time. Most of the time Governments already have enough data on which to base and deliver urgently needed useful programmes to the aged. We would hence like to see a more streamlined follow-up mechanism.

With respect to time frame we support the five years proposed for the global review and appraisal. As for the intermediate stages, flexibility should be left to national and regional partners to work out the most effective follow-up mechanisms that would link to the five-year global plan.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation also supports the strong role of the United Nations system in the review and appraisal by providing technical assistance for capacity building. We already appreciate the important work DESA has done in developing best practices, training materials for capacity building. And we would like to see more of that role in the review and appraisal.

Zambia's programme on the aged, have relied on useful surveys taken by the government in the 1990's. From the survey Zambia was able to obtain important information on fertility mortality and health for the aged. Another area covered by the survey was the extended family system. Based on these surveys government fashioned its response accordingly. One important programme that was developed was the Public Welfare Assistance Programme; this benefits eligible aged person within their communities. Secondly in the health area Zambia came up with a deliberate policy under which elder persons aged 65 years and above are exempted from paying user fees from clinics and health centres. Thirdly, institutional care is also provided to a few communities. With more resources the programmes will be expanded to other needy older persons. Lastly the Zambian Government upholds the importance of the aged persons especially in the context of the family, which is an important support system. As a result the Government adopted the international day of the family, which has been observed since 1994. The day is observed on 15th May under different themes.

Mr. Chairman

The social groups under consideration at this session are important not only in themselves but also for the overall social and economic advancement of many developing countries including Zambia.

The Significance of Social development and human well being cannot be over stated. The review process is indeed timely and relevant. It is our hope that our deliberations at this 42nd session of the Commission, will further enhance our efforts of achieving the goals we set ourselves at Copenhagen, that of essentially placing people at the centre of our development efforts and building a culture of cooperation and partnership as we respond to the immediate needs of the most vulnerable in our societies.

I thank you.