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STATEMENT

BY

**HON. ANGELIKA MUHARUKUA
DEPUTY MINISTER OF GENDER EQUALITY & CHILD
WELFARE OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

AT THE

**52ND SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON
THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW)**

**“FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE
EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN”**

**NEW YORK
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Mr. Chairperson

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau elected to guide the work of this session. We are confident that you will steer our deliberations to a successful conclusion.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by Zambia on behalf of SADC and by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the G77 and China respectively.

Mr. Chairperson

Ladies and Gentlemen

The theme of this 52nd session, which is “*Financing for Gender equality and the empowerment of women*”, is crucial to the achievement of gender equality and women empowerment.

Namibia has a small population of 1.8 million people of which 51.3% are women. The majority of our people reside in the rural areas. Women constitute the majority (52%) and contribute enormously to agricultural production through subsistence farming. Women head 39% of all households, 43% in the rural and 32% in the urban areas.

A high number of women are employed in informal sector; however their work is not recognized and factored into the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. The formal sector employment still tends to favor men over women in high paying or high profile positions, while women’s employment is concentrated in low paid positions. In order to address these inequities, Namibia has put in place various legislations, policies and programmes.

Namibia is committed to the fulfillment of national and international commitments to women to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women. In line with its commitment to the Beijing platform of action, the Government of Namibia uses National Gender Policy (NGP) and the National Gender Plan of Action to ensure gender mainstreaming in various ministries and parastatals.

Mr. Chairperson

The Government of the Republic of Namibia through the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare in collaboration with Ministry of Finance and Office of the Auditor General established a Gender Budgeting Task Force. The aim of the Task Force is to conduct gender analysis of the detailed Ministerial sub-divisional budgets, National and other stakeholders budgets, capacity building for gender budgeting in the public, private sector and for NGO's; create awareness through lobbying and advocacy on the contribution of various activities carried out by women to be valued; advocate for institutionalization of the gender responsive budget initiative among all stakeholders; and develop monitoring mechanisms and indicators to ensure the effective monitoring and evaluation of Gender Responsive Budgets initiative.

The Government through the Ministry of Gender Equality has embarked on a programme to promote Gender Responsive Budgeting; as a further mechanism for financing gender equality programmes in the country. Entry points for the gender responsive budgeting include Key national Policy frameworks such as Poverty Reduction strategy.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia through the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, in its effort to alleviate poverty and empower women has constructed craft centres for women to come together for training, information sharing and to sell their handcraft and other goods.

Each year the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare provides grants to support income generating activities, for women, to come up with projects to support their families. These projects participants receive training in basic financial management to equip them with skills to manage their income generating initiatives profitably. Community members are accorded opportunities to take part in National and regional trade fairs. They also undertake exchange visits to other countries to learn from best practices. But due to the limited financial resources the challenge remains that only a small number of women participate in these visits.

The Government through the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry coordinates co-operative enterprises, of which 45% are exclusively formed and owned by women, while 55% are jointly formed and owned by both men and women. The Ministry also has an Affirmative action loan scheme that benefits more women. The Agricultural Bank of Namibia also offers loans to farmers aimed at improving their agricultural activities with low interest rates for women. The Development Bank of Namibia which focuses on Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) targets the previously disadvantaged persons, particularly women.

Mr. Chairperson

Notwithstanding the progress to date, the Namibian government recognizes that there are lots of challenges for the improvement and realization of equality at all levels of the Namibian society. Some of these challenges are the consequences of gender inequality and patriarchy, including gender-based violence, women in poverty and women's lack of access to social and economic resources. It is therefore imperative for us to continue to devise on strategies and policies aimed at financing development programmes for empowerment of women in our society.

I thank you.