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## **STATEMENT**

**BY**

**BY HON. ROSALIA NGHIDINWA  
MINISTER OF GENDER EQUALITY AND CHILD WELFARE**

**AT**

**THE 57<sup>TH</sup> SESSION  
OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION  
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW)**

**“ELIMINATION AND PREVENTION OF ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST  
WOMEN AND GIRLS”**

**NEW YORK  
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## **Madam Chair**

At the onset, allow me to commend you and the members of the Bureau for your excellent leadership in steering the work of this session. My delegation would like to assure you of its full cooperation and support, and looks forward to the successful outcome of the session.

My delegation would also like to thank the Secretary General for the reports submitted on the priority theme and takes note of the recommendations therein.

Namibia aligns itself with the statements made by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Chad on behalf of the African Group and Malawi on behalf of SADC.

## **Madam Chair**

Namibia welcomes this year's priority theme, entitled "**Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls**". This theme will provide this gathering with tremendous opportunity to devote its discussions to finding ways and means to eliminate and prevent the scourge of violence inflicted on women and girls within our communities.

Violence against women and girls is a universal phenomenon that cut across different economic status, social class and culture. Individuals, communities and societies suffer devastating effects and bear severe economic and social costs of violence against women and girls. It is therefore just and befitting that as members of the United Nations, we invest some time, energy and resources to address this considerable challenge.

However, efforts towards the prevention and elimination of violence would be a fruitless exercise if we didn't establish and address the root causes or the factors that triggers violence. Societal norms and beliefs, gender inequalities, poverty, unemployment, economic dependency and armed conflicts, among others promote violence against women and girls.

## **Madam Chair**

Namibia's commitment to end gender based violence is guided by a constitutional provision, the supreme law of the country which states that "the dignity of all persons shall be inviolable, and no person shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." To fulfill and abide by the constitutional provision, the government of Namibia ratified various regional and international protocols and conventions on the rights of women and girls, and joined forces with regional and international partners, in the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.

## **Madam Chair**

Namibia has also enacted various legislations, and developed numerous policies and programmes, aimed at improving the status of women and girls in the society, eradicating injustice, and combating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls.

A National Advisory Committee against Gender Based Violence was constituted, to advise the government and key stakeholders on policies, legislation and any other action to be taken against gender based violence in the society.

Furthermore, Government established Women and Child Protection Units in all 13 political regions. These units assume a multi-sectoral approach to strengthen the response, coordination and provision of services for victims of GBV.

#### **Madam Chair**

In 2007, Namibia held its first National Gender-Based Violence Conference, which brought together representatives from government, civil society, traditional authorities, Media and Faith-Based organisations from all parts of the country. The Conference aimed at exchanging views on causes and effects of GBV in the society, enhancing and developing strategies on how to combat and prevent GBV, and identify gaps and challenges in the implementation of its legislations. The conference developed Action-Oriented Recommendations and Strategies, resulting in the launching of a national mass media campaign on Zero Tolerance for GBV, which focused on three main issues, such as human trafficking, killing of women and girls, and baby dumping.

Awareness creation plays a major role in the fight to eliminate and prevent violence against women and girls. Namibia has ongoing legal literacy programmes aimed at educating people about their rights and responsibilities. The programmes target traditional leaders, religious leaders, Police, community leaders, youth and the general public. The programme further aims at encouraging men and boys to take responsibilities in changing their attitude and behavior on negative gender stereotypes.

#### **Madam Chair**

Despite our government's strong commitments to prevent and eliminate and violence against women and girls, the scourge is still a national problem. Limited capacity to conduct thoroughly forensic investigations lead to perpetrators not being convicted due to insufficient evidence. In some cases victims become reluctant to lay charges because of their economic dependency and/or fear of reprisal.

#### **Madam Chair**

It is worth mentioning that, on 22 February 2013 the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia tabled an unopposed motion for the National Assembly to condemn gender based violence against women and children, and calls for the enforcement of relevant legislations aimed at the protection of human rights and dignity of all members of the society.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Namibia's commitment to end violence against women and girls and stress the need for collaborative efforts at national, regional and international levels in developing and implementing concrete actions to prevent and eliminate the recurrence of such violence.

**I thank you.**