



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF

333 East 38th Street
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Chairperson
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Commission on the Status of Women.

As South Africa enters its 15th year of democracy and prepares for its fourth general democratic elections, our country is taking stock of many of the accomplishments, challenges

and lessons learnt with regard to building a democratic and non-sexist society. In this regard, we are examining our policies and practices in the area of equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in productive and reproductive life, as well as and the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels. South Africa has furthermore assessed current international debates drawing attention to the full spectrum of

violence, South Africa is striving towards a more equitable approach to prevention, support and care, including nutrition, treatment and continued ethical research in consultation with women. My delegation wishes to urge the international community to invest more resources into basic science research. We also propose that more resources should be dedicated to research on affordable alternatives such as complementary and traditional medicines, as well as nutrition. We are particularly concerned about inadequate drug surveillance and pharmacovigilance capacity, especially in the African region. We therefore call upon our development partners to assist. Surely that must be our comprehensive and collective shared responsibility between men and women of conscience.

Chairperson,

South Africa's efforts to reach the target of 50 percent representation of women in decision-making positions has gained further impetus following the launch on 19 February 2009, of the 50/50 percent Campaign by 2015. This is in line with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. Through this Campaign, political parties are urged to review their electoral lists in order to achieve gender parity. The intention is to ensure that we surpass the current 42 per cent representation of women in Cabinet and the 33 per cent of women in Parliament towards gender parity. This applies to the private sector and civil society as well. We must continue to support women, and capacitate them to ensure that they are retained in those positions.

As part of many detailed projects contained in the Government's Programme of Action, we will pay particular attention to facilitating the processes aimed at strengthening the machineries dealing with matters of gender equality through the establishment of a Women's Ministry to be located in the Presidency. This will ensure that the pinnacle of the National Gender Machinery remains situated in the highest level of Government that is well-resourced with defined authority.

Furthermore, we will continue to strengthen the capacity and mobilise resources that support gender equality and the empowerment of women. The public and private sector need to develop and enhance the capacity for the implementation of financing for women's empowerment programmes and gender equality. There is a need to strengthen and give priority to financing in order to further the advancement of women in all spheres of life.

The current global financial crisis highlights the need for greater participation for women in financial decision-making, acknowledging that the gender dimensions of the causes and consequences of the global financial crisis have thus far received little attention. The South African Government has initiated engagements with business and social partners to design mechanisms to retain jobs and mitigate the impact of the downturn. The challenge however,