

**STATEMENT BY
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OF THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND**

**BEFORE THE THIRD COMMITTEE
66TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**ON AN AGENDA ITEM 28
ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

**NEW YORK
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Chairperson,
Distinguished Delegates,

Since it is the first time I am taking the floor in my delegation's capacity, I would like to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Third Committee for this 66th Session. My delegation is confident that you will see this Committee through the successful conclusion of its work.

I would also like to thank all the various speakers for their informative statements on this agenda item.

My delegation agrees, itself with the statements delivered by Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Kenya on behalf of the African Union and the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Chairperson,

The Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland recognizes women as equal citizens and is committed to the promotion and protection of their human rights without discriminating their role in the family. The Kingdom of Swaziland is born from a rich cultural heritage and values the role of women in society. We regard them as the basic building blocks of our society.

The Kingdom of Swaziland is a State Party to most international, regional and sub-regional protocols relating to the advancement of women. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland guarantees the rights and freedoms of women and it provides that women have the right to equal treatment and equal opportunities in political, economic and social activities.

Chairperson,

We have taken great strides in policy, legislation and programmatic interventions to improve the quality of life of our women. For example, in line with the provisions of our Constitution, the Deeds Registry Act was reviewed successfully and now allows women to register property in their own names even if married in community of property. The Act was passed by Parliament in July 2011.

The National Gender Policy was adopted in October 2010 and an implementation plan has been adopted by the relevant stakeholders. Both the new Medium Term Policy and the National Gender Policy were developed through a participatory process. Under co-ordinating, the responsibility to implement it lies with all stakeholders. The Gender and Family Issues Unit within the Deputy Prime Minister's Office will be responsible for coordinating, monitoring and evaluation.

Chairperson,

At regional level, the Kingdom of Swaziland is actively engaged in initiatives to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. In this regard, in collaboration with the African Union's Declaration of the 2010-2020 African Women's Decade, the Government of Swaziland have launched the Swaziland Women's Decade Road Map in October 2010.

The roadmap contains ten themes namely:

- Economic Empowerment: Agriculture, Fisheries, Education, Environment, Peace and Security (which includes violence against women), Governance and Legal Protection, and mandating government to give Women a decisive leadership position and organizing the young women's movement and mentoring young women.

This roadmap is a result of four dialogues held in all four regions of the country. The main objective of the dialogue was to establish priority projects at the regional level in preparation for projects to be implemented during the decade to improve the lives of all women.

Chairperson,

Despite the progress that has been made, many challenges still exist. The prevailing economic and financial crisis has impacted negatively on the Kingdom of Swaziland. Unemployment, poverty and hunger are at their worst level and women and girls are most affected.

Also, the HIV and AIDS epidemic has compounded the responsibilities of our women as they bear the greater burden of care giving in the home.

The government of the Kingdom of Swaziland appreciates the assistance provided by our development partners in the field of technical cooperation and the local capacity building and it is our hope that this cooperation will be enhanced through the decade.

Chairperson,

We note that the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/66/10 has stated that rural women continue to be economically and socially disadvantaged because of their limited access to economic resources and opportunities, their exclusion from planning and decision-making and their disproportionate burden of unpaid care work.

To this end, we are pleased to report that the Kingdom of Swaziland also recognizes the vital role played by rural women in society, in particular their contribution to development. Our Government has facilitated the projects initiated by women, which are already in place including savings and credit co-operatives designed to address the financial needs of women.

advancement of women

Union's Decision of the year 2010 to 2020. The Swaziland Women's Decade Road Map in October, 2010.

The roadmap contains ten themes namely:

- Economic Empowerment, Agriculture, Health, Education, Eradication of Gender Inequality and Discrimination, Gender Mainstreaming, Women's Leadership and Decision Making, Protection, Financing and Gender Budgeting, Women in Decision Making, Positioning, and Empowering the young women's movement and mentoring young women.

This roadmap is a result of four dialogues held in the country. The main objective of the dialogue was to ascertain priority programmes from the grass-root level in preparation for projects to be implemented during the decade to improve the lives of all women.

Chairperson,

Despite the progress that has been made, many challenges still exist. The prevailing economic and financial crisis have impacted immensely on the Kingdom of Swaziland. Unemployment, poverty and hunger are at their worst level and women and girls are the most affected.

Also, the HIV and AIDS epidemic has compounded the responsibilities of our women as they bear the greatest burden of caring for the orphans.

The government of the Kingdom of Swaziland appreciates the assistance provided by our development partners in the field of technical co-operation and local capacity building and it is our hope that the co-operation will be further strengthened.

Chairperson,

We note that the Secretary-General's Report contained in document A/65/181 states that rural women continue to be economically and socially disadvantaged because of their limited access to economic resources and opportunities, their exclusion from planning and decision-making and their disproportionate burden of unpaid care work.

To this end, we are pleased to report that the Kingdom of Swaziland also recognizes the vital role played by rural women in society, in particular their contribution to development. A number of programmes to facilitate projects initiated by rural women are already in place including savings and credit co-operatives designed to cater for the financial needs of women.