



*Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe  
to the United Nations*

**STATEMENT BY**

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 61<sup>ST</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**ON**

**ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

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Chairperson,

Zimbabwe aligns itself with States represented by governments of the African Group of 77 and China, Sudan on behalf of the African Group and by the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the African Development Community.

Chairperson,

Since the Millennium Declaration was adopted, gender equality and empowerment of women has been viewed as one of the top three MDGs that are viewed as critical to the achievement of all the other Goals. The other two are MDGs 1 - Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger and MDG 6 - Combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases. In addition, in most of our development programmes, gender equality is viewed as per the stipulations of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the 2005 World Summit of the General Assembly.

Chairperson,

Under difficult conditions, Zimbabwe has made significant progress towards the targets we set for ourselves. Indeed progress has been made in implementing instruments that we are Party to. As a way of domesticating the provisions of international instruments and harmonising them with our own national laws, my Government adopted a National Gender Policy, which has continued to provide the requisite institutional framework for gender mainstreaming. As evidence of its commitment to fulfil its obligations, Zimbabwe has submitted reports to the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which have been considered by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women at its 37th session in July 2012. Zimbabwe is ready to learn from the process and plans to continue to improve our women's empowerment and gender with third and fourth reports in due set of society.

Chairperson,

Like most countries and despite all our efforts, Zimbabwe is still recording gender inequality in the areas of women's representation in decision-making processes; the lack of involvement by men and boys; and the gender inequality in employment opportunities and involvement in public life.

Chairperson,

My Government in collaboration with its partners has consequently established various initiatives aimed at reducing the impact of these areas of concern but the efforts still need massive scaling up so as to realize the objectives set out

Nevertheless, Zimbabwe believes that for our women to enjoy the basic standards of health and human rights, their economic empowerment is of critical importance. My delegation believes that the difficulties we face will be met through dialogue and they will be better positioned to cope with their difficulties and overcome them.

Chairperson,

My delegation is aware that women who inhabit rural areas face a number of challenges and more discrimination in our context. Rural women are vital for enhancing agricultural and rural development. However, the persistence of rural poverty has meant that rural areas in almost all MDGs. Rural women have limited access to education and gainful employment, and face low quality food and unbalanced diet. However, despite their challenges rural women are not weak; they are crucial to the realization of agricultural productivity, food and nutritional security. In Zimbabwe, we salute these women for their hard work and innovation in cultivating and preserving food crops, and managing small animals. These gallant women continue to overcome most traditional obstacles to their advancement.

Chairperson,

Zimbabwe recognizes that women migrant workers face special concerns owing to their vulnerabilities, violence, exploitation and irregular migration. My delegation however, views them as active contributors to development in both the countries of origin and destination. We thereby call for the enhancement of their protection so that their social and economic development and that of society at large is not hampered. As much as if not better than men migrant women work hard and send resources to their families back home, thereby sustaining their lives and souls.

Chairperson,

Regarding women with disabilities, my country has put in place various frameworks to cater for citizens living with disabilities. We remain committed to learning from and sharing best practices on better ways to enhance the situation of women with disabilities.

Chairperson,

Zimbabwe is committed to cooperating with all countries and other stakeholders in combating trafficking in women and girls. Trafficking is a contemporary form of slavery. We have labelled it as a serious scourge facing humanity today. To that end, Zimbabwe has been actively engaged in strengthening our national and sub-regional responses

to trafficking in persons. My delegation also encourages Member States to implement the UN Global Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons.

Chairperson,

Violence against women is not tolerated in our country and our Government and law enforcement agencies will continue to strengthen their capacity in combating this social vice. However, tradition is a formidable foe which we do not underestimate. We remain certain to defeat it in this regard.

Chairperson,

Zimbabwe is facing challenges in improving maternal and reproductive health services. Maternal and child mortality in the world remains high and Zimbabwe is no exception. We agree with those that have asserted that no woman should die or be disabled in the process of giving birth to life. My delegation appeals for the international community's cooperation in combating maternal mortality and morbidity, obstetrics fistula included. The improvement of health systems, ending child marriages and discouraging adolescent pregnancies will go a long way in eliminating these ills. I am grateful to all those who have made efforts to improve health care for women in particular.

Chairperson,

The creation of UN Women, the new gender entity, has generated hope that women's issues will receive scaled up attention and action. Zimbabwe hopes that the advancement of women will receive a comprehensive approach that devotes adequate attention to the social, economic and political life of women and society at large. My delegation continues to urge UN Women to also prioritize strengthening capacities in the collection, analysis and use of data disaggregated by geographical area. It has been proven that improved data capturing and use by all stakeholders can contribute to better policy planning and programming across thematic sectors. My country hopes that all the necessary resources, financial and technical, will immediately be availed to ensure the successful implementation of programmes at the country level in a decentralized manner.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reaffirm its firm commitment to eradicate all forms of social, cultural, economic and political inequalities that perpetuate gender inequalities and impede the advancement and empowerment of women. We call on the international community to join hands in the fulfillment of commitments we made in Beijing in 1995 and the objectives we set in New York in 2000. Given concerted cooperation, we should advance our efforts.

I thank you.