SIXTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRD COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY

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THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AGENDA ITEM 27 (A-D)
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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New York, NY.
Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson to lead this committee and also wish to extend the congratulations to the members of the Bureau on their election. I am confident that through your able leadership exhibited so far, you will guide and successfully manage the affairs of this committee to the expected end.

My delegation wishes to align itself to the statement made by Fiji for the Group of 77 and China, the statement by Ethiopia for the AU as well as the statement presented by Lesotho on behalf of SADC. My Delegation further wishes to thank the Secretary General for the comprehensive and highly informative reports on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,
The Government of Zambia is committed to the social development of its people through policy and structural transformation aimed at improving the social economic profiles of its people. The Zambian government, cognizant of the centrality of humanity in sustainable development has repositioned and refocused its national development plans to an all inclusive and people centered desired growth outcomes with social integration elements.

Mr. Chairman,
My delegation cannot agree more with the Secretary General’s report that almost 2 decades after the Copenhagen World Summit, the issues of poverty, and social exclusion are still prevalent, and regrettably, in some cases even worse than before. It is indeed unfortunate that at the dawn of the post 2015 development agenda, many countries including mine will not achieve MDG 1, 4 and 5. High poverty levels, social vulnerability, inequality and social exclusion, higher rates of unemployment especially for the youth, and major health challenges and illiteracy rates still pose challenges to sustainable development. The Zambia case is not any different from the global picture. Poverty of the majority of the population, high unemployment especially among the Youth and Women, the widening gap of equality and social inclusiveness pose challenges to the Zambian government.

Mr. Chairman,
A number of countries have done extremely well on MDG 2 on education. Zambia is one of the MDG2 success stories with key indicators such as the attainment of a net enrolment in primary schools reaching 94 percent, and has attained gender parity in primary school enrolment. Nevertheless, we realize that much more needs to be done
in improving the quality of education and to have a paradigm shift to a focus of high school completion rates and tertiary education and skills development especially for the youth at different levels. Commitments therefore, towards significant improvement of literacy levels for all at both national and the international level should be prioritized as education remains key to inclusive social development and empowerment of the vulnerable in our societies.

Mr. Chairman
Meaningful attainment of social development for the future we want is devoid without emphasis on the youth empowerment within a comprehensive framework, inclusive of family values, supportive mechanisms and infrastructure that covers not only their quality education, but also skills development and decent work for all. The Government of Zambia recognise that the empowerment of the youth, women and the vulnerable is the quickest way to reducing poverty and therefore an MDG acceleration framework aimed at addressing the multi-faceted nature of poverty with special attention given to employment generation especially for the youth, and other vulnerable groups has been a matter of focus. In line with the MDG Africa report for 2013, the framework is designed to enhance efforts to reduce inequality by pursuing inclusive growth strategies.

Mr. Chairman,
Lessons of the past have the absolute potential to equip us to better handle the social deficits of our people. The Millennium Declaration through the targets of the Millennium Development Goals, which embodied the social development outcomes have transformed the social development landscape. The MDGs contributions are tremendous, but more needs to be done to accelerate the progress for the attainment of the MDGs. The lessons of the MDGs further provide an opportunity for leverage on the post 2015 development agenda.

The envisioned post 2015 development agenda should resonate with the calls to stop the characterization of poverty but to instead have goals for enhanced and expedited elimination of all forms of poverty. The social sphere should in addition see an end to disguised jobs but instead have full productive and decent work.

Mr. Chairman,
Zambia in collaboration with partners is working and committed to ensuring progress in the national labour policy reforms, by embarking on review and amendment of existing labour laws to update and align them to international labour instruments as well as to harmonise them with other national policies and legislation.
Mr. Chairman,
Social transformation and integration are anchored on full enjoyment of women’s rights and total involvement of women in decision-making in all spheres of life. My delegation realizes the current society imbalances that subject women to social exclusion, vulnerability and inequalities, and Zambia has therefore put in place and has been implementing the gender policy that addresses gender inequality. Further the government has made deliberate effort to appoint women in influential positions in government to address the inequalities.

I therefore wish to conclude by urging the international community to commit to prioritising the key aspect of social development in the post 2015 development agenda and to maintain its importance as a necessary ingredient to achieving sustainable development.

I thank you.