STATEMENT
BY H.E. MR. WILFRIED I. EMVULA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NAMIBIA
ON BEHALF OF SADC MEMBER STATES ON THE GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE UNDER ITEM 28: THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

NEW YORK, 11 OCTOBER 2013
Chairperson

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States, namely: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my own country Namibia.

SADC aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Fiji on behalf of G77 and China and the representative of Ethiopia on behalf of the African Group.

SADC would like to thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive reports provided under this agenda item, and takes note of the recommendations therein.

Chairperson,

SADC Member States recognize that gender equality, the empowerment of women, women’s full enjoyment of all human rights and the eradication of poverty, are essential to economic and social development, as well as for the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals. It is in this regard that SADC adopted the Protocol on Gender and Development that encompasses commitments made in all regional, continental and global instruments for achieving gender equality. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development outlines 28 measurable targets that are to be reached by 2015. The protocol further advances gender equality by ensuring accountability by all SADC Member States, as well as providing a forum for the sharing of best practices, peer support and review.

Chairperson,

SADC Member States reaffirm the commitments made in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, and are individually and collectively committed to implement the provisions therein.
Whereas significant progress has been achieved there are still major constraints that are hindering progress in attaining full gender equality. The gap between commitment and implementation remains a major concern. Contradictions exist between customary laws, national laws and international commitments; the representation of women in decision-making positions remains low, and high levels of illiteracy and poverty among women and girls remain major obstacles for gender equality. Concerted efforts are thus needed to address these challenges.

The main objective of our community is to improve economic growth and development, alleviate poverty, enhance the quality of life of the people in the Region, support its socially disadvantaged areas through productive systems, deeper co-operation and integration, so that the region emerges as a competitive and effective player in international trade and world economy. In seeking to meet both its social and economic aspirations, SADC recognizes the important contribution of women to human resource development in political, economic and social development, as well as in facilitating integration and competitiveness.

Chairperson,

Gender based violence, particularly violence against women and girls, is also a major challenge in our region. SADC Member States condemn violence against women in all its forms and manifestation, and are committed to end such violence. The SADC Protocol calls on member states to among other things, enact as well as enforce legislation that prohibits all forms of gender based violence; ensure that such laws on gender based violence provide for the comprehensive testing, treatment and care of survivors of sexual assault; enact and adopt specific legislation provisions to prevent human trafficking and provide for holistic services to the victims with the aim of reintegrating them into society; enact legislation and adopt and implement policies, strategies and programs which define and prohibit sexual harassment in all spheres; and provide deterrent sanctions for perpetrators of sexual harassment. In this regard, all SADC Member States have ratified the addendum to the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development on Violence against Women.
Currently 12 of the 14 member states of the SADC have in place domestic violence laws and 11 have integrated National Action Plans that address gender based violence.

Additionally, provisions on the comprehensive treatment for survivors of gender based violence including the post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) are available in nine countries while some make the provision available to health workers.

Chairperson,

SADC member States recognize the important role played by the media in sensitizing the community about the negative impact of gender based violence. To this end, SADC Member states are carrying out an extensive media campaign with a view of addressing the underlying causes of gender-based violence, by involving the family and focusing on socialization. Every year SADC observes the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, which starts in mid November and culminates with activities, including media coverage of the 16-Days in the various media outlets throughout the region.

While there is evidence that the SADC region is doing well on issues pertaining to gender based violence, there are gaps remaining between policy and implementation. To address these challenges, SADC is working with NGOs and other stake holders in the private sector especially in the area of service delivery. This is especially for accessible, affordable and specialized legal services for the survivors of Gender Based Violence. SADC also works with these sectors in providing specialized facilities that includes places of shelter and safety for the survivors.

Chairperson,

SADC believes that to sustainably contribute to reduce gender based violence and bring about the realisation of women's rights everywhere, there is need to strengthen collaboration and cooperation between Member States and development partners, donors, academia, researchers, civil society organizations, community leaders and women and girls themselves. Scaling up investment in gender equality
and women’s empowerment is essential for making progress on all the goals and for donors to fulfill commitments in the campaign to end gender based violence.

SADC countries consider that effective coordination of the response to violence against women and gender mainstreaming in all sectors requires adequate funding for policies, plans and strategies, so that entities responsible for Gender and Women’s Affairs can ensure effective coordination on issues related to combating violence against women and gender strengthening activities.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that SADC is committed to further implementing the Beijing Platform of Action and the Outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. SADC is continuously addressing the challenges it is facing in the implementation process and wishes to appeal for the continued support of the international community.

I thank you for your attention!