STATEMENT

DELIVERED
BY
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AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS

ON AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

DURING THE PLENARY OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

16 OCTOBER, 2013
NEW YORK

Please Check Against Delivery
Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

1. Botswana aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Fiji on behalf of G77 and China, Ethiopia on behalf of the Africa Group and Namibia on behalf of Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Mr. Chairman

2. The Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations sets as one of the Organisation's central goals the reaffirmation of "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women". Equality of rights for women is therefore a founding principle of the United Nations.

3. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action continue to provide a basis for action by governments and other stakeholders for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women as well as an impetus for adopting and enhancing laws, policies and programmes aimed at bringing about equality between men and women.

4. Despite norms and standards set by these instruments, my delegation believes that the international community still has a long way to go before women can be said to be fully enjoying fundamental rights and freedoms and dignity that guarantees their well-being and the realization of their full potential.

Mr. Chairman

5. Recognizing that improving gender equality and empowering women are pathways to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs, Botswana reaffirms her commitment to strengthening efforts to foster equality, justice and peace among her people.
6. In this regard, Botswana continues to strive for the achievement of the development goals and commitments relating to gender equality, empowerment of women; and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and gender based violence.

7. In pursuit of these goals, national efforts continue to be made in the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in our policies and programmes; enhancing education and training opportunities for women and girls, and, most importantly, increasing their participation in leadership and decision making.

8. Botswana also continues to make progress in addressing gender disparities, which are reflected in areas such as the educational attainment and the number of women in technical, professional and executive positions. Notwithstanding such positive indicators, we are well aware and concerned about the gender disparities that still exist across other sectors.

9. In order to address these, Government has developed a number of interventions. These include, among others, the Women's Economic Empowerment Programme where a total of P14.8 million has been disbursed to more than 1220 beneficiaries to start income generating projects in 2012. This support includes a special dispensation for People Living with Disabilities. We also continue to expose business women to market opportunities at Local, Regional and International levels. In support of this initiative, the national Women's Exposition and Business Fora continue to be held.

Mr. Chairman,

10. With regard to eliminating discrimination against women, Botswana reaffirms her commitment to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and continues to make strides in this regard.

11. We also attach great importance to the work of the Committee on CEDAW. The Committee's close cooperation and collaboration with UN-Women and interactions with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other relevant special procedures mandate holders is a welcome development.
Mr. Chairman,

12. On violence against women, we welcome the significant progress achieved by Member States to prevent and address gender based violence including the enactment or amendments of laws that criminalize acts of violence against women, strengthening of national legal and policy frameworks as well as enhancing prevention and protection measures among others.

13. These actions by States demonstrate our continued commitment and determination to address violence against women.

14. However, despite efforts that continue to be made, we note with grave concern that gender based violence remains the major impediment to the attainment of gender equality in many countries, including my own country, Botswana.

15. We also remain concerned about violence against women with disabilities and violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

16. In this regard, I wish to emphasize the importance of strengthening efforts to end violence against women and ending impunity by bringing perpetrators to justice.

17. We also concur with the views shared by many States on the need to address the root causes of violence, including by strengthening women's economic independence and eliminating discrimination against them in law and in practice.

18. Recalling that arms trade has a gender dimension and direct linkage to discrimination and gender based violence with far reaching implications on the consolidation of peace and security, gender equality and development, Botswana also welcomes the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in April this year.

Mr. Chairman,

19. As stated in the Secretary General’s Report, we recognize the important strides made by many countries to promote women’s participation in politics and public life.
20. On the other hand, we also recognize that women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, among other factors.

21. In this regard, Botswana supports the Secretary General’s view that concerted action, political will and commitment are needed to address barriers to women’s advancement. This is especially relevant in the light of the 20 year review of the Beijing Platform for Action and the ongoing debate post 2015 development agenda.

Mr. Chairman

22. The advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality is a collective endeavour, for which all stakeholders including Governments, the UN system the private sector and civil society, should work together to ensure their realization.

23. To this end, I wish to conclude by reiterating Botswana’s commitment to the fulfillment of her obligations in advancing the status of women and the promotion and protection of their rights.

I thank you for your attention.