DRAFT STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE, H.E. AMB. C. CHIPAZIWA, UNDER AGENDA ITEM 65 ON
THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD: 18 OCTOBER 2013

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by Malawi on behalf of the
Southern African Development Community (SADC). I also thank the Secretary General for
the reports he has submitted under this agenda item and take note of the recommendations
contained therein.

Mr. Chairman,

The Zimbabwean Government is fully committed to the protection and full realisation of
the rights of the child. We recognise that sustained investment into our children’s well
being and education as well as their protection from violence and abuse is crucial to the
future of our nation. This is why our government continues to be actively involved in
efforts to improve the well-being of children at the national, regional and international
levels.

As part of national efforts and in compliance with the various international and regional
instruments on the rights and protection of children, Zimbabwe has put in place various
protective policies, legislative instruments and programmes to ensure the fulfilment of
children’s rights at national level. Allow me to expand on a few of these programmes.

At policy level, the National Child Survival Strategy (2010-2015) brings together all
national stakeholders under a common framework. We have also put in place a sizable
social protection mechanism through the second phase of our National Action Plan for
Orphans and Vulnerable Children (2011-2015) which is implemented with the support of
the Child Protection Fund.

At programme level, the National Programme of Action for Children is the overarching
body that coordinates child welfare programmes. It is also mandated with creating
awareness on children’s rights in view of the fact that a significant portion of rights
infringements on children stem from ignorance. A multisectoral National Child Welfare
Council has also been put in place, with the duty to monitor overall child rights but with an
emphasis on children in difficult circumstances e.g. orphans and in child-led households.

We have also established the Victim Friendly System which is aimed at supporting
survivors of sexual violence and abuse. In order to ensure that women and children who
have experienced violence are treated with the compassion and understanding they
require, this unit is staffed by personnel specifically trained to handle vulnerable witnesses.
A protocol on the Multi-sectoral Management of Child and Sexual Abuse for women and
girls was also developed to promote a coordinated and integrated approach to sexual violence and abuse. We are also in the process of developing guidelines for pre-trial diversion for children in conflict with the law which will form the basis for work on the Juvenile Justice Act.

Mr. Chairman,

Zimbabwe deplores trafficking in and all other forms of economic and sexual exploitation of children. In February 2012, we demonstrated our commitment to addressing this challenge by taking the step to accede to the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. We reiterate the need to expand research and action into the demand side of trafficking and other forms of economic and sexual exploitation of children. We are therefore grateful to the Special Rapporteur of the Secretary General on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography for mentioning this in her interaction with the Committee on Wednesday.

Mr. Chair,

As I conclude I am gratified to note that, at this session, our regional group, SADC will table its biannual resolution on the Girl Child. This resolution is timely and critical for us as it focuses on an issue of great concern to my Government. The phenomenon of child headed households is hardly new, however its incidence has been increasing in the wake of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. On our part we have put in place measures to alleviate the situation of children in such households by expanding social protection to them including through cash transfers. A lot more still needs to be done, however, not only to assist such children but also to address the root causes of child headed households.

I thank you!