

Please check against delivery



Statement by

**H.E. Mr. Hipólito Zózimo Patricio**

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs  
and Cooperation

of the Republic of Mozambique

before

the Security Council Open Meeting on  
“Women, Peace and Security”

New York, October 24, 2000

Mr. President,

It gives me a great pleasure to join previous speakers in congratulating Your Excellency on your assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council and for the brilliant manner in which you have conducted the affairs of the Security Council during the current month of October.

I would also like to congratulate your predecessor H.E. Ambassador Moctar Ouane of Mali for his tireless dedication to the work of the Security Council.

I wish to commend your initiative to convene this open debate on "Women, Peace and Security" in this very important day, the United Nations Day. This debate will, certainly, be an excellent occasion for us to once again join efforts and exchange views on the search for appropriate and concerted actions, as well as to delineate adequate follow-up procedures to implement the decisions and recommendations made during the Millennium Summit and the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations entitled "Women: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", with a view to ensuring a more active participation of women in the promotion of peace and security world-wide.

Mr. President,

Peace and security will continue to be the major concern of humanity in the new millennium, as conflicts continue to grow and devastate many parts of the world.

Women and girls are vulnerable both in time of peace and war due to profound gender inequalities that still characterise our societies. It is estimated that 80% of internal displaced persons and refugees are women and children. Women and girls are also victims of rape, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, trafficking, sexual humiliation and mutilation.

The reversal of this situation requires from all of us political will and determination to fulfill our commitments with regard to all decisions and recommendations made for the protection and promotion of the rights of women.

Mr. President,

As stated by our Heads of State and Government, assembled in the Millennium Summit, "no individual and nation must be denied the opportunity to benefit from development. The equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured".

Against this background, women must play a role of relevance in conflict prevention, resolution of disputes, peace-keeping, post-conflict peace-building and in the reconstruction process and development.

In this regard, my delegation appreciates the dedication shown by the United Nations bodies, such as the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, that in close collaboration with the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, are joining efforts to ensure participation of women in the promotion of peace and security. We commend the leadership role that the Secretary-General has provided throughout the United Nations System.

We very much appreciate the decision by the Government of Namibia to host the Seminar on "Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations", organised by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The seminar adopted the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action, documents that identify actions to be taken to ensure that a gender perspective is adopted in all multidimensional operations in support of peace.

Mr. President,

In order to protect and promote the rights of women, including their involvement in maintaining peace and security, the Government of Mozambique adopted political, social, and economic frameworks, which envisage gender perspective in all spheres of activity. This is done in conformity with our Constitution and many international legal instruments and Declarations that are part of our internal laws, namely the 1995 Beijing and Copenhagen Declarations.

The government committed itself to increase the effectiveness of all regional and international legal instruments, to which is party, through reviewing national legislation.

Accordingly, the government in close partnership with the civil society, embarked in the process of reviewing the national legislation, aimed at incorporating the main provisions contained in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and other related international and regional instruments in our internal law. The government has equally been undertaking actions to increase the awareness on women's rights among the Mozambique society. As part of this process a national debate is taking place on the review of the Law of Family where women from different social groups and religious background are actively participating in order to express and defend their rights, such as on marriage and related issues.

To enhance the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, the government established a Ministry of Women and Co-ordination of Social Action, that co-ordinates the activities of an "operative group" comprising government officials, the civil society, academia, whose objective is to supervise and enhance the implementation of policies and programmes for the advancement of women.

The participation of women in leadership and decision making has also been encouraged by the government. For instance, the representativity of women in the parliament, from 1995 to 2000, increased from 65 to 80, from a total number of 250 parliamentarians. At the executive level the number of women increased from 1 minister and 4 vice-ministers to 3 ministers and 5 vice-ministers.

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with UNICEF, is promoting access to education of the girl child so as to take up their rightful positions in society.

In the context of the implementation of the Government's Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty for the period of 2000 - 2004, the role of and special attention on women is underlined as priority, particularly regarding women in rural areas or as heads of family.

Women are also part of the priority amongst vulnerable groups with regard to infection and impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the country. For that reason they deserve a special attention in the context of the national response to the epidemic that is led by the Government, with participation of various social groups, through the implementation of the National Strategic Plan to Combat STD's/HIV/AIDS.

The implementation of these policies and programmes is enabling the protection of the rights of women and their participation at all levels of the national reconstruction process and social development.

In order for them to promote and defend their rights, the Mozambican women are organised in various specialised associations and they are also members of international women's organisations. Earlier this month they organised all around the country various rallies and marches as part of the 2000 world women march. In the capital city, Maputo, thousands of women and men participated in a march that culminated with a big rally where they conveyed to H. E. Joaquim Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique their reivindications on the protection of women rights, namely against domestic violence.

Mr. President,

Durable peace and security will only be obtained if all peace loving nations dedicate themselves to tackling the root causes of conflict in the world. One of them and most urgent to developing countries is the eradication of poverty. This noble task requires the commitment of all international and national actors, including women.

In Mozambique and in many other African countries women played and still play an important role in looking for urgent ways to bring about durable solutions to the conflicts still prevailing. They are always in the forefront for peace and economic development in Africa and all over the world.

Women and girls need to have more access to education, employment, social and political participation in this noble endeavour to maintain peace and security.

In the Southern African Development Community (SADC), we equally develop and implement programs that enhance women's participation in the process of economic cooperation and integration following the guidelines of the Beijing and Copenhagen Declarations as well as of the recent Millennium Declaration.

It is now time for all of us to translate commitments already made into concrete action.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we commend the Security Council for its initiative and we urge it to continue its endeavour in ensuring that all concerned refrain from human rights abuses in conflict situations, particularly those of women and children to respect international law and to promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and a culture of peace.

I thank you.