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STATEMENT

BY

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ON BEHALF OF SADC

AT

**THE SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING
ON WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY**

NEW YORK, 27 OCTOBER 2005

Mr. President,

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

Let me thank the panelists for their informative and illuminating introductory presentations. We welcome the report of the Secretary General S/2005/636 on Women and Peace and Security.

Mr. President,

I am delighted that it was during Namibia's Presidency of the Security Council in October 2000, that an open debate and discussions were initiated which culminated in the adoption of this landmark resolution, which we have the honour of reviewing today. This five-year review should present us with an opportunity to pause and evaluate the progress we have made thus far in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325. It is our fervent belief that this event will add the desired impetus to our commitment to fully realize all the goals and objectives of resolution 1325. We are thus gratified by efforts undertaken within the UN to develop a system wide action plan to implement this resolution.

The action plan has provided us with a framework by which progress on the implementation of resolution 1325 can be coordinated, monitored and evaluated. It is important that the action plan does not "reinvent the wheel" but rather builds on the achievements already made. In this regard, we welcome the recommendation to review the adequacy of existing operational tools, guidelines and manuals for gender mainstreaming.

We further note with appreciation that the action plan has taken into account the capacity building of women in peacemaking and peace building. Women groups, especially those in the vicinity of conflict areas have an important role to play especially during reconciliation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. Local expertise needs to be fully utilized in all phases of conflict resolution and peace building.

However, we note with concern that although there has been some progress in the reporting of gender issues in the Secretary-General's reports as well as in the Security Council, gaps in the reporting of gender or women issues continues to exist. There is thus a need to critically examine the reasons behind this under-reporting of gender and women issues and to take the necessary steps to remedy the situation. In many cases, non-inclusion of gender aspects is a result of inadequate capacity rather than reluctance. We would therefore like to stress that continuous capacity building of staff and the different stakeholders on gender analysis skills is crucial for the successful implementation of resolution 1325.

We would call for closer collaboration between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations such as AU, SADC and ECOWAS to mention but a few. This

would however require capacity building both in terms of technical, human and financial resources. Therefore, we call upon the UN system to assist in building the capacities of these organizations.

Mr. President,

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly have called for women's equal participation with men and their full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

An area of concern to us, however, is the continued low representation of women in all phases of the peace building process. Despite the disproportionate impact of conflict on women, they continue to hold their families and communities together and often undertake initiatives across warring factions under extremely difficult conditions. When involved, they will bring their experiences into formal peace processes. Thus, it is imperative that they are included in all levels of peace building processes. It is unfortunate that more often than not, the efforts of women are insufficiently recognized and supported, both politically and financially. As a result, women's rights are rarely integrated in peace agreements and in the structures supporting post conflict reconstruction.

We therefore urge that the role of women in these processes be built in the peace agreements from the very beginning. The challenge we have before us is on how to increase the number of women in all phases and levels of peace processes. Men need to be sensitized on the positive contributions that women can bring to the negotiating table. Deliberate efforts are thus required by both the UN system and member States to identify and support women to be part of peace processes. The inadequate representation of women in decision-making is not a phenomenon experienced in peace building processes alone, but rather is extended to all other areas. In this regard, we urge the UN system organizations, within their respective mandates and Member States to address the barriers faced by women to move up to decision-making positions.

Mr. President,

The establishment of the Peace Building Commission has presented us with an opportunity to ensure that gender is integrated in the design and work of the Commission. We must formulate concrete strategies, actions and programmes, in a consistent and effective manner, to advance the role of women in the area of peace and security. We should ensure the effective participation of women in the Commission.

Mr. President,

SADC condemns the use of sexual and gender based violence against women and children as weapons of war as well as the widespread acts of violation of their human rights. We thus call upon all parties involved in conflicts to respect international humanitarian law and to ensure the protection of women and children.

Furthermore, the continuing sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by some UN peacekeepers and personnel on women and girls is of great concern to us. We urge for the accelerated implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations on sexual exploitation and abuse. We further urge troop and police-contributing countries to take punitive actions towards those involved in acts of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Finally, let me reaffirm SADC's commitment to the full implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325.

I thank you.