

KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF GENDER

THE ZIMBABWEAN AMBASSADOR TO ZAMBIA

THE COUNTRY COORDINATOR, CONSUMER UNITY AND TRUST SOCIETY,

COOPERATING PARTNERS

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

MEDIA HOUSES

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS INVITED

ALL PROTOCOLS OBSERVED

I AM HONOURED AND PRIVILEGED TO ADDRESS THIS PRE-CSW63 REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY STRATEGY MEETING WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF DEVELOPING A COMMON ADVOCACY POSITION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO LOBBY GOVERNMENTS PRIOR TO AND DURING CSW63. YOUR PRESENCE HERE DEMONSTRATES THE IMPORTANCE THAT YOUR INSTITUTIONS ATTACH TO THE FIGHT FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN ALL SPHERES -- ESPECIALLY THE SPHERE SOCIAL PROTECTION WHICH IS WHY WE ARE ALL GATHERED HERE TODAY.

MAY I EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO ALL OF YOU TO ZAMBIA. WE ARE HAPPY TO PLAY HOST TO THIS MEETING AND ARE DELIGHTED THAT YOU TOOK YOUR TIME TO BE PART OF THIS IMPORTANT CONSULTATIVE PROCESS WHICH WILL ALLOW US TO SUSTAIN DIALOGUE ON THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

I AM VERY PLEASED TO SEE THE DIVERSITY OF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE REGION WHO HAVE TRAVELED FOR THIS MEETING WHICH SIMPLY SHOWS THAT GENDER ISSUES CONTINUE TO PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL WELFARE OF OUR COUNTRY, OF THE REGION AND THE CONTINENT AT LARGE.

THE WORKSHOP WE ARE HAVING TODAY IS A CULMINATION OF THE VARIOUS CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS BETWEEN ORGANISATIONS FIGHTING FOR GENDER JUSTICE ON THE CONTINENT. IT IS NO SECRET THAT WOMEN CONTINUE TO BE MARGINALIZED IN ANY SOCIETY. WOMEN AND GIRLS ACROSS THE GLOBE CONTINUE TO FACE VIOLENCE AND ABUSE, UNEQUAL WAGE GAPS, EARLY CHILD MARRIAGES, LACK OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP AMONG OTHER THINGS.

GENDER EQUALITY IS NOT ONLY A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT, BUT A NECESSARY FOUNDATION FOR A PEACEFUL, PROSPEROUS AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD. ACCORDING TO THE UNITED NATIONS, PROGRESS IS BEING MADE IN THE REDUCTION OF HARMFUL PRACTICES SUCH AS CHILD MARRIAGE AND FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION, WHICH HAS DECLINED BY 30% IN THE PAST DECADE, BUT THERE IS STILL MUCH WORK TO BE DONE TO COMPLETELY ELIMINATE SUCH PRACTICES. SOME OF THE SOLUTIONS LIE IN PROVIDING WOMEN AND GIRLS

WITH EQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE, DECENT WORK AND SOCIAL PROTECTION, AS WELL AS AND REPRESENTATION IN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES WHICH FUEL SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIES AND BENEFIT SOCIETIES AND HUMANITY AT LARGE.

THIS PRE-MEETING WILL ALLOW US AS A REGION, AND AS A CONTINENT TO SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE AT THE CSW WHICH WILL HELP US CLEARLY COMMUNICATE OUR RECOMMENDATIONS. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT THIS MEETING WILL DISCUSS CHALLENGES THAT WOMEN, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR, FACE IN ACCESSING SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES ON THE CONTINENT SPECIFICALLY IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION. WE ARE JOINED TODAY BY VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS FROM THE REGION WHO WILL SHARE WITH US THE CHALLENGES FROM THEIR COUNTRIES WITH THE GOAL OF DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS TO PRESENT AT THE CSW.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, OUR SISTERS FROM NAMIBIA, ZIMBABWE, MALAWI, BOTSWANA AND ZAMBIA HAVE WORKED TIRELESSLY OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS TO HELP MAKE THIS CONSULTATIVE MEETING POSSIBLE AND WE WOULD LIKE TO SAY THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION TOWARDS THE FIGHT TO HAVE WOMENS VOICES HEARD IN INTERNATIONAL SPACES.

PRIOR TO THIS MEETING THERE WAS ANOTHER CONSULTATIVE MEETING HELD IN CAIRO EGYPT FROM THE 4TH TO THE 6TH OF FEBRUARY 2019, TO DRAFT AFRICA'S POSITION TO ALL MINISTERS OF GENDER PRIOR TO THE CSW AND SOME KEY RECOMMENDATIONS WERE SHARED WITH ALL AFRICAN MINISTERS OF GENDER. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, ALLOW ME TO SHARE SOME OF THE KEY HIGHLIGHTS THAT CAME FROM THE CONSULTATIVE MEETING IN CAIRO IN WHICH STRATEGIES FOR A UNIFIED POSITION AT CSW63 WERE DEVELOPED. THESE FOCUSED ON:

- STRATEGIES FOR GENDER RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION
- STRATEGIES FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICES
- STRATEGIES FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE, BASIC UTILITIES AND MOBILITY AND,
- STRATEGIES FOR GENDER RESPONSIVE APPROACH TO SOCIAL PROTECTION, PUBLIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

WE WILL TAKE TIME TODAY TO PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO DIFFERENT COUNTRY CASES OF HOW WOMEN ARE LEFT BEHIND IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES IN THE REGION.

IN SPITE OF THE GREAT DISCUSSIONS THAT WILL TAKE PLACE TODAY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I WOULD HOWEVER LIKE TO STATE THAT THESE ISSUES CANNOT BE DISCUSSED ONLY IN A WORKSHOP LIKE THIS. I WOULD THEREFORE LIKE TO ENOURAGE US ALL TO SUSTAIN DIALOGUE ON THE ISSUES WE FACE AS WOMEN SO THAT WE MAY CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR OUR RIGHTS

NOT ONLY AT THE CSW BUT AT OTHER REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PLATFORMS. LIKE THE SAYING GOES WHEN WOMEN GATHER AND UNITE GREAT THINGS HAPPEN.

WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT DURING THE CSW AND AFTER SO THAT WE MAY FOLLOW UP ON KEY RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WILL COME FROM THE CSW.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION AND LOOKING FORWARD TO SUCCESSFUL DELIBERATIONS.