



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



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STATEMENT BY

**MR. SIMON M. KAPILIMA
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MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY
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AT THE

**FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

ON

AGENDA ITEM 3(b):

**REVIEW OF RELEVANT UNITED NATIONS PLANS AND
PROGRAMMES PERTAINING TO THE SITUATION
OF SOCIAL GROUPS**

New York
February 6, 2009

Chairperson,

Zambia is pleased to join the debate on the review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups. We welcome the continued focus of the Commission on the important role played by the youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities in fostering socio-economic development and commend its work in promoting programmes targeting these social groups. My delegation appreciates the reports of the Secretary – General, which form a good basis for our discussions.

Chairperson,

Zambia remains committed to the implementation of the World Programme of action concerning persons with disabilities. This is in recognition of the fact that the cost of excluding persons with disabilities in the development agenda has negative consequences on the economy and society as a whole and runs counter to the promotion and protection of human rights which Zambia upholds. In this regard, we welcome the entry into force of the landmark Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. The speedy entry into force of these instruments represents their importance in the elaboration of human rights. To end the discrimination faced by persons with disabilities and promote their inclusiveness in society, Zambia recently signed the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

Chairperson,

Persons with disabilities in Zambia like in most countries face challenges in accessing their socio-economic and political rights. In recognition of these challenges, Zambia has put in place a number of programmes and strategies such as the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Citizen's Economic Empowerment Programme; involvement of persons with disabilities in the on-going constitutional review process; reviewing of the Disability Act to align it with the international human rights instruments; appointment of Disability Focal Point Persons in most government institutions to mainstream disability issues in development; provision of tax rebate to employers of persons with disabilities; higher tax credit for persons with disabilities and; increased access to Anti –Retroviral Treatment.

Chairperson,

Zambia has a relatively young population. Our youths face a number of challenges which include high unemployment, HIV and AIDS and poverty. Addressing these challenges is key to achieving development targets which include the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To this end, the county has revised a National Youth Policy and is in the process of developing a plan of action for the effective implementation of the policy. Further, Zambia has continued to promote and provide youth skills training programmes; provide bursaries to vulnerable youths in all government vocational training institutions and rehabilitate and reintegrate orphans and vulnerable youths, comprising mostly of street children.

Chairperson,

Government also recognizes the need to provide better welfare for older persons and a National Policy on Ageing is currently under consideration. Programmes being implemented for older persons include: the provision of financial and material support to old people's homes; provision of affordable medical services and; support to organizations working with older persons. In order to raise awareness on ageing, Government has continued to commemorate the International Day for Older Persons in line with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

Chairperson,

The role of the family as a basic and fundamental unit of society in promoting social integration in Zambia remains very significant. To this effect, Government has undertaken a number of measures and initiatives which include the Public Welfare Assistance Scheme and the Social Cash Transfers aimed at cushioning the family against many socio-economic challenges such as poverty and HIV and AIDS.

Furthermore, Government encourages the existence of the extended family system to take care of the old people, persons with disabilities as well as orphans and vulnerable children.

Chairperson,

Despite the many challenges that Zambia faces, I wish to reaffirm my country's commitment to promoting the welfare of various social groups as outlined in the relevant United Nations initiatives. I wish to call on the international community that in the face of the recent international global crises, there will be continued support to many development programmes in developing countries like Zambia.

I thank you.