



*Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe
to the United Nations*

STATEMENT

BY

HON. M. P. MANGWANA (MP)
MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE

ON

REVIEW OF FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE OUTCOME OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH
SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TO THE

HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING CONVENED BY THE COMMISSION ON
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DURING ITS 43RD SESSION

FEBRUARY, 2005
NEW YORK

Check against Delivery

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe to the United Nations – 128 East 56th street, New York, NY, 10022
Tel. (212) 980-9511 – Fax. (212) 308-6705
E-mail: zimbabwe@un.int.org

Notwithstanding these negative circumstances, Zimbabwe has continued on a democratization process that takes into account its historical realities. It has remained committed to holding regular parliamentary and presidential elections without fail. It has also continued to uphold the co-existence of the State and civil society, although the experiences over the past few years have necessitated the need for greater clarity of the roles of the State and civil society so as to foster transparency and accountability.

This process is constant with the regional perspective of SADC to which Zimbabwe is committed and believes in the benefits of regional, political and economic integration. At a global level Zimbabwe, like many developing countries believes that further democratization of international institutions such as the UN and its organs will go a long way in creating conducive environment for the achievement of the Copenhagen Commitments.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the Copenhagen Summit in 1995, the country has gone a long way in developing a market-driven economy. The achievements on this front were positive despite the withdrawal of the Bretton Woods institutions from supporting economic reforms in Zimbabwe. The country has created several macro-economic liberalization reforms. However, due to structural rigidities and skewed income and asset ownership, these reforms could not yield maximum benefits to the majority of our people. As a result, over the period 1995 to the new millennium, the country recorded major declines in most social indicators, thus negating the spirit of Copenhagen.

The main lesson learnt from these experiences was on the need for the country to come up with home-grown economic development programmes that realize the centrality of an inclusive social development approach to underpin

sustainable economic growth. In the same spirit, Zimbabwe has been able to customize the Millennium Development Goals to reflect the country's realities and capabilities in line with the prevailing economic and political environment. Accordingly, the country's micro-economic Policy Framework is deliberately crafted to realize the Millennium Development Goals in a holistic and integrated manner.

Mr. Chairman,

In response to Commitment 9 of the Social Summit that called for "increasing significantly and/or utilizing more efficiently the resources allocated to social development" and also to the Millennium Development Goals, Zimbabwe is allocating significant resources towards social development. However, due to the economic crisis situation from which we are just recovering, a large proportion of resources that could have been directed towards real social development is being channeled towards social safety nets. Despite the economic decline that the country has suffered in the last few years, Zimbabwe still remains committed to development and protecting its human capital. By year 2000 Zimbabwe had already attained net enrolment ratios of 92.5% and 40.5% for primary and secondary school respectively. In order to avoid reversal of these social indications, Zimbabwe initiated a Social Protection Programme in education, premised on the assumption that 25% households may withdraw children from school as a coping mechanism to vulnerability. Thus to maintain these attained enrolment figures an education support grant was introduced targeting to support 25% of all enrolled children. These strategies have seen the country's literacy rate being maintained as 98.04%.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the Copenhagen Summit, Zimbabwe has demonstrated unwavering commitment towards poverty alleviation. The cornerstone of the country's efforts in this area was the Poverty Alleviation Action Plan (PAAP) that was

presented to the Summit as the country's framework for poverty reduction. The main strategy of PAAP is to invest in people as the country's key resource for development by putting them as the primary agencies of their own development.

Zimbabwe also subscribes to the poverty eradication objectives of the various international Conferences and Summits and is already implementing the programmes of action in the following ways:

- **The Beijing Conference on Women in 1995:** Zimbabwe, through its Gender Policy, sees the economic empowerment of women and their increased participation in decision making as the key to enhance social development. However gender empowerment and participation in decision making is predicated on an education system that allows gender balance in enrolment levels. In this regard, Zimbabwe by 2001 had already attained a gender balance in both primary and secondary education with percentage enrolments of girls at 50,8% and 53% respectively. In line with the SADC protocol on gender empowerment under the MDG gender empowerment targets, the country has set itself to achieve the 50% target of women in decision making positions by 2015.

By 1995, at the inception of the world Summit on Social Development, Zimbabwe had attained a 30% ratio of women in administrative and managerial positions as well as a 40% ratio in women in professional and technical positions. In addition, Zimbabwe is proud to be among the few countries with a woman Vice President. Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, in Zimbabwe like most other developing countries we are seeing a decline in these ratios as a result of international labour migration which some would like to call brain drain to the developed world. This labour movement from developing to developed countries will undermine the attainment of the Copenhagen commitments as well as the MDGS.

- **World Summit on Sustainable Development:** In addition to several other initiatives that are being implemented, including the Johannesburg Plan of Action on Sustainable Development, by Government and civil society, the country has linked the WSSD agenda to the attainment of its MGD goals and targets.
- **Millennium Declaration:** Zimbabwe has joined many other countries who are signatories to this declaration in implementing the outcomes of the Millennium Summit. The country has recently submitted its first implementation progress report to the UN Secretary General. It has also gone further to underpin its Macroeconomic Policy Framework for 2005 – 2006 with the need to attain the MDG targets

In addition to implementing the outcomes of the major international Conferences directed towards poverty eradication, Zimbabwe has gone further to redistribute land to the marginalized black majority as a means of empowering this group through increasing their participation in the economic backbone of the country, i.e. agriculture. While in the short term the resettled farmers have been denied full self-realization by the recurrent droughts, in the long term they will justify their existence through increased agricultural production.

Mr. Chairman,

Poverty and HIV/AIDS are two of the most devastating pandemics ever to hit Zimbabwe and the region. Their relationship can no longer be disputed. The HIV and AIDS pandemic is causing a large orphan-hood burden that is compromising our efforts towards poverty reduction. In order to mobilize resources to finance interventions against the pandemic, Zimbabwe has created a National AIDS Trust Fund, administered by the National AIDS Council into which every employed person contributes 3% of his/her income

tax. The fund is also being used to procure ARVs but this intervention still has significant resource constraints.

Most frustrating, however, is that Zimbabwe, despite being one of the countries with the highest prevalence rates in the world, it was denied assistance under the Global Fund for HIV and AIDS, Malaria and TB. It is unfortunate that political considerations are being used by some world bodies to deny deserving people their right to life. This decision by the Global Fund defied the spirit of Copenhagen and many other international Declarations that sought to intensify the fight against HIV and AIDS.

Mr. Chairman,

The commitment to promote the goal of full employment has been the most difficult to achieve in Zimbabwe. While Zimbabwe has explored several options to promote the goal of full employment however its efforts have been hampered by several constraints. These include macro-economic instability and the adverse political image that the country has received as a result of opposition to its to its land reform programme. The net effect has been a reduction in FDI and induced. To address these negative developments Zimbabwe has come up with an economic revival programme which has already started to yield positive gains and if maintained will see significant improvement in the area of employment.

Mr. Chairman,

Zimbabwe has made significant investment towards the implementation of the commitment to promote social integration by fostering a society that is stable, safe and just and is based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, and non-discrimination, tolerance, equal opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all people including the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.

Like the rest of Southern African Development Community (SADC) members, Zimbabwe recognizes the need to develop constitutional and legal instruments to institutionalize a human rights culture. In the period under review, the process of democratization and decentralization gathered momentum. Several initiatives have been made towards the greater participation of civil society in policy design and formulation. Rights and entitlements of people living with disabilities have been modified in law, and a bill to protect the rights and privileges of senior citizens is currently under consideration.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude, Mr. Chairman, by reiterating Zimbabwe's commitment to the implementation of Copenhagen and Copenhagen + 5, and by expressing the hope that this 43rd session of the Commission on Social Development will assist us in charting the way forward.

I thank you.