



Secretary-General,
President of the General Assembly,
Vice-President of ECOSOC,
Under-Secretary-General at UN Women,
Excellences,
Distinguished delegates,
Representatives of civil society,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Chairperson,

Chairperson,

The Republic of South Africa, in its capacity as the chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of SADC.

Chair, allow me at the very outset to take this opportunity to extend, on behalf of SADC, our sincere congratulation to you for presiding over this session. Indeed, it is in order to compliment you and the Bureau for steering this important Commission.

As SADC, we wholeheartedly pledge our full support and cooperation to you in the discharge of your vast mandate. We have absolute confidence in your ability to steer the proceedings of the 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to a fruitful conclusion.

Chairperson,

The SADC Region re-aligns itself with the CSW 2018 **Theme:** "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls" together with the **Review Theme:** "Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women" as agreed during the 47th CSW session in 2003.

SADC would like to recognise and acknowledge the African Union's theme, which declared the year 2018 as the year for '*winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation*'. As SADC, we acknowledge that by declaring 2018 the African Anti-Corruption Year, the policy organs of the AU have renewed Africa's commitment to end this scourge. As SADC we believe that corruption depletes resources that should be invested in uplifting the lives of women and girls; and in particular women and girls living in rural communities.

SADC also supports the initiative by the AU to establish the AU Fund for African Women (AUFW) which will expand access to start-up finance for women in farming, agro-processing, manufacturing and infrastructural development, thus, contributing to ownership and creating employment opportunities for women.

Chairperson,

As a way of promoting regional integration, SADC has developed the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) Industrialisation Strategy and Regional Multi-Dimensional Women's Economic Empowerment Programme. These instruments serve as regional blue prints for SADC States to design programmes that will address social and economic challenges and create opportunities for the upliftment of rural economies and increase women's access to productive resources, finance, and contribute largely to the reduction of poverty amongst women and girls living in rural areas; and promote their well-being. Furthermore, the instruments clearly address issues such as employment creation, poverty reduction, social protection and inclusive development by putting focus on supporting industrialisation and productive sectors with a view to developing value chains in the SADC region.

In supporting global integration, the **SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap** and revised **SADC Protocol on Gender and Development** aims to align the protocol with provisions of other global and regional instruments such as the **UN SDGs, African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa, and AU Agenda 2063**. Full implementation of these instruments will assist Member States to respond adequately, reverse and eliminate regional challenges facing women and girls living in rural areas such as: gender based violence, child marriages, harmful practices, poverty, access to basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation; access to infrastructure and health services and access to land.

Chairperson,

The **SADC Gender Protocol Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework** and **SADC Gender and Development Monitor** are in place to assess progress on the implementation of the instruments and SADC priorities.

SADC has also created a platform through which critical regional issues are debated such as the **SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF)**. Through this forum Member States are able to hear multiple voices, promote and advocate for change, create space for networking, exchange knowledge and share best practices.

Through the SADC Charter on Women in Science, Engineering and Technology Organization (SADC WISETO) SADC member states will endeavour to mainstream girls into fields that pursue Science, Engineering and Technology for career pathing, and increase their employability as well as relevance into the 4th industrial revolution.

Women and girls in rural communities are targets of the outbreak of violence and targeted crimes. In this regard, SADC has joined hands with the international community to promote the leadership and participation of women in security and peace-keeping initiatives by developing and implementing the **SADC Regional Strategy and Action Plan on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325** and its associated resolutions titled **SADC Regional Strategy on Women, Peace and Security Agenda**, as well as the **Revised SADC Strategic Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children**.

Chairperson,

I need to reiterate that indeed it will be a serious travesty if SADC does not continue to acknowledge and thank this Commission for the unwavering support shown during CSW in 2016 when adopting the SADC sponsored UN CSW Resolution 60/2 on Women, the Girl Child and HIV and AIDS by overwhelming consensus. To further demonstrate SADC's resolve to implement UN Treaties as well as the adopted Resolutions, SADC has already developed a Framework and Programme of Action to implement this UN CSW Resolution 60/2.

The Framework seeks to highlight priority actions and interventions based on the CSW Resolution 60/2 and indicators for progress in harmony with the targets as set in the UNAIDS Fast Track To end AIDS targets by 2030, the High level Political Declaration and the SADC Gender Protocol Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework. The Programme of Action aims to catalyze and accelerate implementation of Resolution 60/2 at the national and regional levels within SADC Member States.

In addition, SADC Secretariat and SADC Parliamentary Forum came up with a Gender Responsive Oversight Model (GROM), which is an instrument designed to monitor the implementation of the SADC sponsored UN CSW Resolution 60/2. This GROM will be utilized by all SADC National Parliaments Women's Caucuses to monitor and oversee implementation of UN CSW Resolution 60/2 by the executive. It is anticipated that the GROM will soon be adopted by the SADC PF Plenary Assembly, the highest decision-making body, as a legitimate product to be utilized by SADC National Parliaments.

Last but not least, Chair, the SADC region pledges support towards the realisation of Development Agenda 2030 and AU Agenda 2063 in improving the livelihoods of women, especially of women in rural communities, and investing in youth for sustainable development.

I thank you for your kind attention