

**STATEMENT BY HER EXCELLENCY PINDI HAZARA CHANA, HIGH
COMMISSIONER OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TO
THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AT THE TECHNICAL
MEETING OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF WOMEN,
YOUTHS , CIVIL SOCIETIES AND THE IGCLR,
8TH – 9TH SEPTEMBER, 2019, NAIROBI**

H.E. Huang Xia, UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

Invited guests,

The Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honor and a great responsibility to have been invited by the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations for the Great Lakes Region, to represent today not only the United Republic of Tanzania but also as a representative of the Southern African Development Community (**SADC**) to this very important Technical Meeting of Representatives of Women and Youths from Civil Societies and International Conference for Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

Excellences and fellow participants, as alluded to in the invitation extended to me, the task ahead of us today at this technical meeting is to identify Women, Peace and Security issues that will enable us to come up with a strong advocacy document for the Peace and Security Cooperation Framework (PSCF) and relevant segments of the high - level Summit of the Regional Oversight Mechanism (**ROM**).

Excellences, I am afraid the issues that we are about to unpack, are not really new to us and in most cases we as women have at some stage either experienced them or know a couple of our fellow women who had gone through or are still going through those difficult situations in the SADC Region as well as in the continent as a whole.

Whether, it is a sexual and gender-based violence, under representation of women in politics and peace and security endeavours, Women and children suffering during wars, patriarchal notions of family values and terrible customs of which we are sometimes, reluctant to address due to fear of retaliation by our societies or systematic exclusion of women in public life, we all know that we ought to bring these issues to light and also find ways of addressing their root causes.

At this juncture, please allow me to cite one or two instruments that have been put forward by SADC with a view to addressing the inequalities entrenched in our respective societies.

The SADC Declaration and the Treaty define the SADC Vision as that of a **SHARED FUTURE** in an environment of peace, security and stability, regional cooperation and integration based on equity, mutual benefit and solidarity. In addition to the SADC Treaty, we in the SADC Region are committed to the Principles and Spirit of the Charter of the United Nations **(1948)**, the Constitutive Act of the African Union **(2000)** and the Protocol on establishing the Peace and Security Council of the African Union **(2003)**.

In **2001**, Member States signed the SADC **Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation** which among others, provides a platform for prevention, containment and resolution of inter and intra state conflict by peaceful means. We in the SADC Region recognise that it is within the context of these conflicts that the lives women and children in particular are being threatened and so we deliberated intentionally on the dire need to protect those who are mostly vulnerable.

Again, the revised **SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2015)**, having incorporated the spirit of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance **(2007)**, were specifically revised to reduce and eventually eliminate election-related conflicts in which again, women and children in many cases, become victims of the post-electoral conflicts.

Excellences, let me also cite the Article 28 (1) and (2) of the **SADC Protocol on Gender and Development of 2008**, which calls upon Member States shall to put in place measures to ensure that women

have equal representation and participation in key decision-making positions, conflict resolution and Peace Building processes which are in line with the UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

In the same vein, article 21 the Protocol stresses the importance of taking necessary steps to prevent and eliminate incidences of human rights abuse, especially women and children and further ensure that such perpetrators are brought before a court of a competent jurisdiction.

But we, women know better, and with the benefit of hindsight, we have come to appreciate the lessons of history, for it has taught us that sometimes ***it is easier said than done!*** However, in the SADC region, women are thriving hard and are committed to finding ways of addressing these issues. Let me encourage us, to never give up in this noble struggle of ours and trust me, the future is promising as long as we stand committed and together as one!

Excellences, and Distinguished Participants, SADC as a sub region organization, has borrowed a leaf from the African Union, our umbrella organization, both of which stress on the importance of taking measures including legislation, where appropriate, to simply discourage traditional norms, including social, economic, cultural and political practices which legitimize and exacerbate the persistence and tolerance of gender-based violence with a view to again, addressing them for good.

Yet, despite these instruments and with a consideration that women and children are the primary victims of a combined security, political and humanitarian crisis, women remained excluded from various conflict resolution bodies. We all agree that the need for our early involvement and sustained engagement, has now become a priority and not just an afterthought as one would have put it.

Madame Chairperson/Programme Director, indeed the topic at hand is dear to my heart as in my previous assignment, I was extensively involved in matters of women representation and empowerment while serving as the Member of Parliament (MP) and Deputy Minister for Community Development, Gender and Children. Some of my duties as an MP and a Minister were to propose, advise and institute effective measures geared at advocating for the rights of women in many spheres

including decision-making bodies. With strong leadership of H.E. Dr. John Pombe Joseph Magufuli, Tanzania has now become a good example in terms of empowering women in the spheres of politics and key decision-making bodies. We are strongly aiming at the 50/50 representation of women in decision-making bodies such as the Parliament.

But Madame Chair/Program Director, I want us to believe that our struggle is far from being over as many women are still struggling not only within the SADC region but also in Africa and the world as a whole. It is in this context Madame Chairperson that I want to place an emphasis on the importance of inclusive negotiations and implementation processes, which can support the participation of women in parliament, Government, civil societies, etc. It is high time these concerns are addressed openly, failure of which will result in devastating results.

Excellences, the issue of security of the women activists has been raised in different fora by many of us. The risks that these fellow women have to endure when trying to bring cases before the justice system, should not be underestimated or even taken for granted. There is therefore an urgent need to establish mechanisms in which women activists are protected and given due attention. Cases of gender-based violence, for example are prioritized in our court systems, perpetrators are brought to justice and punished without delay since we women believe that: ***Justice Delayed is, a Justice Denied.***

Another issue which I also wish to bring to your attention Madame Chairperson revolves around the survivors of, whether war, rape or any abuse. These challenges continue to plague our regions today, we as women are still witnessing the prevalence of poverty and precarious security situations and political stalemates in our continent. We must not wait for others to consider us or even feel sympathetic towards us but we must act swiftly to ensure that those of us who might be involved in these crises, are provided with lifesaving medical and psycho-social assistance when such needs arise.

Finally, it is crucial that the advocacy document that we are ready to develop today for the Peace and Security Cooperation Framework Guarantors, for the Technical Support Committee of the PSCF and for the relevant segments of the High-level Summit of the Regional Oversight Mechanism (ROM) contains specific goals and indicators designed to measure the progress and outcomes of policies, programs and reforms in a manner corresponding to the objectives that we have set for ourselves.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

ASANTE SANA