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

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**STATEMENT BY
MARIAM J. MWAFFISI, PERMANENT SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,
GENDER AND CHILDREN**

**IN THE
THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 62ND SESSION OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

ON

**AGENDA ITEM 66:
PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE
RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

FRIDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2007

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Chairperson,

My delegation is pleased to participate in this important debate on the promotion and protection of the rights of children. The well being of children is an important issue for the government of the United Republic of Tanzania as our population projection show that Children below the age of 18 constitute half of the population. Thus for us children are our future.

We align ourselves with a statement read by Namibia on behalf of Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)

Chairperson,

The government of the United Republic of Tanzania is committed to the promotion and protection of the rights of Children. Our national Development Programmes as well as the poverty reduction strategy known as the National Strategy for Growth and reduction of Poverty have incorporated children's issues and have key outcomes that embrace child focused goals and targets of the Millennium Development Goals. The government has ratified the convention on the rights of the child and its two optional Protocol. Currently we are developing a children's act that will take into consideration our obligations under the conventions and the protocols.

Violence against children is an area of concern for government. The government has taken several measures to address violence against children. A national plan of action to combat violence against women and children is in place and has been disseminated to various stakeholders for implementation. Through the Sexual offences special provisions act (SOSPA) of 1998, the government is taking stern measures on sexual violence and abuses against women and children. In addition to making Female Genital Mutilation a criminal offence, A national plan of action to combat Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is also in place and provides guidance on elimination of FGM, through inta alia advocacy, and training.

Chairperson,

Another concern of the government is the rapid increase in the number of most vulnerable children whose rights need to be promoted and protected. Such children include orphans, children living on the streets, child labourers, sexually exploited children, children with disabilities and those involved in child trafficking. Currently, it is estimated that there are about 2.5 million

most vulnerable children in the country. The government is striving to ensure that communities through assistance of the state would take care of orphaned children and those devoid of care and protection. Currently the government has developed a Costed Action Plan for providing most vulnerable children by providing minimum support for these children such as household care and support, education and health.

To further address violations of human rights against children, our national Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance has a women and children's desk to address the women's and children concerns. The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance is empowered to receive, investigate and inquire into complaints on violation of human rights and principles of good governance. The Commission has conducted public hearings on violence and abuse and made recommendations to the government that have contributed towards improving the children's enjoyment of human rights.

Chairperson,

The challenge in promoting and protection of the rights of children has also been the inadequate information and knowledge in communities on the rights of children as well as on the remedies to address violations. While a number of advocacy campaigns have been undertaken, due to inadequate human capacity and financial resource it has not been possible to reach a wider audience and especially those at family and community levels.

We wish to underscore on the importance of policies to systematically prevent violence against children especially those emanating from the family and the community. In this endeavour the government of Tanzania is reviewing the Child Development Policy (1996) to provide for policy statement and directives on child participation, the protection of children particularly on abuse, violence and exploitation.

Chairperson,

Tanzania, has continued to implement activities earmarked to reach the full realization of the rights of every Tanzanian in accordance with "A World Fit for Children". The priority goals for making Tanzania Fit for Children included promoting healthy lives, providing quality education, combating HIV/AIDS, protection from abuse, exploitation and violence, children and youth participation and children in need of special protection measures.

In addressing these priority areas, Substantial progress has been made in the reduction of infant and under-five mortality through provision of micronutrients, including Vitamin A and implementation of child survival, protection and development programmes such as Expanded Programme for Immunization, Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses, malaria control and treatment and breastfeeding. Some decline in Maternal Mortality Rate has been observed in Zanzibar. Alongside the decline is the increase in births that occurred in health facilities and attended by trained health personnel. There

is also growing awareness of the importance of prompt birth registration as an essential means of protecting children's right to identity including name and nationality, and as key for securing the fulfillment of other rights.

There has been significant progress towards universal primary education, particularly since the implementation of the Primary Development Plan (PEDP) and the abolition of school fees. The Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET) has provided basic education opportunity to out of school children and rouse them back to formal schooling and other education and training avenues.

Chairperson,

Despite these improvements, there are challenges which we need to address. Poverty continues to be the underlying cause. Other challenges include deaths of children from preventable illnesses, with 80% of deaths occurring at home; the quality of health services remains a problem due to a number of factors including human resources and inadequate medical equipment; access to adequate safe water and sanitation, especially among the rural communities; provision of quality education, high rate of HIV/AIDS prevalence. The other challenge that Tanzania has been facing is to play its part in ensuring that the refugee child gets a smooth transition in development and survival.

Chairperson,

Promotion and protection of the rights of children require our concerted efforts. While we believe that as a government we have the primary responsibility to promote and protect the rights of children we wish to appeal that international cooperation is required to supplement national efforts. We wish to further appeal for debt cancellation that would free our resources for the social sectors such as improving the well being of the child.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all development partners, the civil society and the UN agencies in particular UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, ILO, UNFPA for the technical and financial support they have provided.

Chairperson,

Let me conclude by reiterating the commitment of the government of the United Republic of Tanzania to the promotion and protection of the rights of children and in making the world fit for Children.

Thank you.