



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR N JEZILE
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TO THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

50TH SESSION COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

AGENDA ITEM III: EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS AND PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

10-13 OCTOBER 2022

I thank you Chairperson,

South Africa wishes to express its appreciation towards all the dedicated efforts of the Co-Chairs of the Gender Workstream in leading the negotiating process on the voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition.

Although it is deeply regrettable that the final round of negotiations did not result in a consensus text, it is nonetheless encouraging that there are many areas of agreement and those areas of disagreement have clearly been defined.

South Africa believes that due to the critical and urgent need to advance gender equality and empowering women and girls to unlock their potential in advancing food security and nutrition, the work already undertaken in the Gender Workstream is too valuable to be lost.

As outlined by the Chairperson of the Committee, South Africa is supportive of an approach to continue with consultations to map out a process that would address the well-known areas of disagreement, taking into consideration respective positions and agreed United Nations language on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

Our collective objective should be the adoption of these guidelines at the 51st Session of the Committee in October 2023.

Chairperson,

In Africa, women's empowerment and gender equality have a high priority as evident with the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

This legally binding instrument not only deals with matters of health and reproductive rights, but also clearly outlines the right of women to sustainable development.

In this regard, those party to this instrument are obliged to promote women's access to and control over productive resources such as land, guarantee their right to property as well as access to credit, training and skills development.

South Africa has also prioritised enlarging the role of women in advancing food security through meaningful participation of women in agriculture, and policies are being implemented to accelerate land reform to the benefit of women.

Key areas of support to women in agriculture include not only land availability but also funding, financing, training as well as access to markets and modern farming technologies.

It is acknowledged with appreciation that many of these priorities are also reflected in Co-Chairs draft text of the voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment.

Chairperson,

With these comments, South Africa stands ready to constructively participate in a process that would facilitate the early adoption of voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment.

I thank you.