



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZAMBIA

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**PRESENTATION PAPER FOR MS N SUBULWA, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
FOR SIOMA CONSTITUENCY, FOR USE DURING THE REGIONAL
WORKSHOP ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS IN
PROMOTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS
CONVENTION AS WELL AS UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1540
(2004) PREVENTING THE PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS
DESTRUCTION TO NON STATE ACTORS, INCLUDING TERRORIST
ORGANIZATIONS**

17TH TO 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2018, DAR-ES –SALAAM, TANZANIA

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

SEPTEMBER, 2018

Chairperson,

To begin with, I would like to join my fellow colleagues in thanking the organisers for bringing together female Members Parliament to deliberate on this important subject matter of Biological weapons.

We are all aware that, Biological Weapons are used to target living organisms that includes humans, animals and vegetation. However, they may also be used to contaminate non-living substances such as air, water and soil. It must be put on record that matters that border on people's well-being hold a very soft spot in the hearts of women whether a Member of Parliament or not.

Allow me now to share some experiences from Zambia on “the **Regional Perspectives on Promoting Universality and Implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004)**”

Chairperson,

From the onset, I must mention that Zambia has associated itself with the BMC since 2008. You may wish to note that Zambia became a state party to the BWC on 15th January 2008 and is affiliated to the Group of Non-aligned and Other States.

However, let me be quick to point out that Zambia does not possess any Biological Weapons for its operations as prescribed by the BWC. Despite this, the institutions mandated to keep peace and securities are very vigilant and have put in place mechanisms to monitor the possible acquisition, distribution and possession of Biological Weapons.

Chairperson,

Zambia's economy is mainly funded by mining, which depends on chemicals for its production and processing of minerals. Such industrial use of chemicals is monitored by the Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA), which is an independent

environmental regulator and coordinating agency, established in 2011 through an Act of Parliament.

In addition, the Zambian Parliament has enacted laws that address issues related to proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. For instance the Anti – Terrorism and Non-Proliferation Act, 2018 was enacted in order to prevent and prohibit the carrying out of terrorism financing and proliferation activities; provide for measures for the detection and prevention of terrorism and proliferation activities. The Act further provides, for the continued existence of the National Anti-Terrorism Centre.

Chairperson,

I must hasten to mention that even though our security forces do not possess Biological Weapons, we still benefit from being party to the BWC because the information from the Convention capacitates and empowers the institutions mandated to prevent the possession or transportation or distribution of such substances by the private sector.

In addition, Zambia being a land locked country opens itself to the risk of being a transit for transporting destructive substances. Hence, it goes without saying that by being party to the BWC we are being proactive as a nation realising that with globalisation taking root in the country is not immune from such risks.

Chairperson,

It is of great importance that women parliamentarians play an active role in promoting the implementation of this Convention as well as the UN Security council resolution 1540 (2004), given that Biological Weapons are deadly to welfare of animals and crops, and maybe contagious and do not confine itself to national border, hence its effects can spread rapidly around the world.

As a learning point from the United Nations Office For Disarmament Affairs(UNODA), although of natural origin, the 2014/16 Ebola virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in West Africa demonstrated the lack of preparedness in the global health and humanitarian system to

respond to larger scale disease outbreaks.¹ This for me as a legislator is an alarming state of affairs and therefore, needs concerted efforts by all especially us the Women Parliamentarians.

Chairperson,

In winding up, allow me to propose some interventions that we the Women Parliamentarians could endeavour to undertake in our respective countries:

- Lobby for the domestication of the BWC in our respective countries by translating the commitments in the Convention into national action. This entails engaging the Executive through various initiatives and platforms to have effective implementation of the BWC in various Government programmes and policies.
- Analyse and review national budgets with the lenses of articles from the BWC. This will empower the institutions in our country to learn more about this Convention and implement the necessary preventive measures to avoid development, production, stockpiling, acquisition or retention of agent, toxins, weapons, equipment and delivery.
- Be more vigilant when legislating to ensure laws that are made are responsive to the provisions of the Convention. This will entail us being champions for the Convention by popularising the articles in the Convention.
- Women Parliamentarians should strive to come together (as is the practice in many parliaments' women has voluntary groupings like parliamentary Caucus) and push the agenda of the BWC. Through this platform I foresee a great opportunity for women MPs to create awareness on this Convention to enable the public be aware of this bio-security issue.

¹ United Nations Office For Disarmament Affairs, page 8, the biological Weapons Convention: An Introduction

- Furthermore, for female parliamentarians that represent border constituencies, it would be good for us to lobby for mechanisms to be put in place that address the challenges of bio security so that as outbreaks occur in neighbouring countries such areas will be well prepared.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, I would like to thank you once more, for extending a hand to the Zambian Parliament to participate in this very insightful workshop. I would like to say that I will be the champion for these brilliant ideas to my fellow women Parliamentarians including our male counterpart.

God bless you all.

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