**NGO Coordination Council******

 Non- governmental Organisation Council

**PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

 **30th November 2016**

**OASIS FORUM JOINS THE REST OF THE WORLD**

**IN COMMEMORATING 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM**

**AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

The Oasis Forum joins the rest of the world in commemorating the 16 days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence (GBV) under the theme: *‘Orange the World: Raise Money to End Violence against Women and Girls.’*

The UN Secretary General’s campaign *“UNITE to End Violence Against Women”* initiative which calls for the mobilization of resources towards the fight against GBV could not have come at a better time than now when the world is seeking to meet the Sustainable Development Goal  (SDG) No. 5, which includes a specific target on ending violence against women and girls.

The Oasis Forum realises that one of the major challenges to efforts to prevent and end violence against women and girls in Zambia is the substantial funding shortfall which has also hampered the full implementation of the Anti GBV Act of 2011, which legislated among other measures the establishment of government GBV Fund, building of safe houses, Fast-Track Courts and One-Centres in all Provinces.

The levels of GBV in Zambia have reached a crisis level with 4,235  cases recorded in the 2016 third quarter only by the Zambia Police, though showing a marginal 14.5% reduction in cases compared to the 4,951 cases in 2015 during the same period. Nevertheless, the incidences are still unacceptably high.

GBV still disproportionately affects more women than men although in 2016 we have witnessed a number of cases of women allegedly killing their husbands. According to the 2013-14 Zambia Health Survey (ZDHS), 44% of women aged 15-49 have experience Physical violence at least once since the age of 15. In addition, 37% experienced physical violence within the 12 months prior to the survey while 47 percent of ever married women aged 15 -49 experienced physical, sexual and/or emotional violence from their current or most recent husband or partner.

Through the theme of this year's 16 days of activism, we are being encouraged to **"orange our neighbourhoods"** in support of victims of GBV. Indeed, we can find victims of GBV in every neighbourhood, men and women. The Bible tells us that love covers a multitude of sins. Thus, to defeat this scourge, we must love our neighbour by restraining ourselves from inflicting physical, verbal or emotional abuse and by protecting our neighbours from such abuse. Further, the Bible provides good counsel: "*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres*" **(1 Corinthians 13:4-8)**. If that is the test of love, then we in Zambia have a lot to do in our fight against GBV so that we may translate the declaration of Zambia as a “Christian Nation” into reality.

GBV has adverse effects on the country’s economy with high costs on medical care and loss of labour hours to attending to court cases, seeking medical care and general breakdown of the family support system.

We therefore call for the mainstreaming of the fight against GBV in all programmes. We also support the call by NGOCC for the private sector involvement in financing the fight against GBV.



Fr. Cleophas Lungu
CHAIRPERSON – OASIS FORUM

*Issued On 30th November, 2016 in Lusaka on behalf of Convenors:*

1. Rev. Suzanne Matale – General Secretary (CCZ)
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