

# **ZAMBIAN NATIONAL NETWORK AGAINST SEXUAL & GENDER BASED VIOLENCE NETWORK**

## **JOINT COMMUNIQUE**

**THEME: Zambia Unite! End Sexual & Gender Based Violence**

**Presented after the National Indaba held at Andrews Motel, Lusaka, September 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 2019**

We the more than 250 delegates drawn from Government, grassroots social movements, academia, political parties, traditional leadership, private sector, civil society, the trade union movement, women's organisations, Community Based Organisations, students, youths, people with disabilities, the media and other various sectors gathered at the National Indaba on Sexual & Gender Based Violence convened by the Non-governmental Gender Organisations Coordinating Council (NGOCC) at Andrews Motel, Lusaka, from 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019 under the theme "Zambia Unite! End Sexual and Gender Based Violence":

**AFFIRMING** Government's provision of a policy and legal framework including non-discriminatory measures in the Constitution, Gender Equity and Equality Act, the Anti Gender Based Violence Act, the National Gender Policy and the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage;

**ACKNOWLEDGING** the various efforts and the huge resources, financial and human, spent by stakeholders and actors to end Sexual and Gender Based Violence in the ten (10) Provinces and in one hundred and fourteen (114) Districts of Zambia;

**APPRECIATING** the ardor and passion by all the various stakeholders local, national and international to end Sexual and Gender Based Violence especially against women and girls who are the worst affected by the scourge;

**NOTING** that the sanctity of the human body and the fact that Sexual and Gender Based Violence is a human rights violation;

**OBSERVING** the non-existence of coordinated and coherent interventions and advocacy mechanisms among the various stakeholders in addressing Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) but faced with ever increased incidences of the vice;

**CONCERNED WITH THE: -**

- Escalating cases of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) some of which are resulting in loss of life;
- loss of working hours and reduced productivity, as a result of survivors (both women and men) nursing wounds, thence adversely affecting the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP);
- continued high prevalence of child marriage at 31% which is mainly affecting girls in rural areas;
- increasing number of orphaned children that are becoming destitute as a result of losing parents to SGBV;
- increasing number of girls being defiled on a daily basis by close members of the family which have far reaching emotional and psychological implications on their lives;
- increasing cases of sexual harassment against women at places of work;
- increasing cases of "sextortion", that is, seeking sexual favors in exchange for services and products.
- Low levels of financing to public institutions mandated to manage SGBV activities
- Low levels of focus by political actors on SGBV

**OUTRAGED BY: -**

- The growing violent caderism and escalating incidences of political related violence in Zambia in general thereby further threatening the participation of women and youth in politics;

- The murder of young girls and children through Sexual and Gender Based Violence especially by close family members
- The high prevalence in child marriage at 31% and hence denying children the opportunity to progress within the education system and become productive citizens.
- The high prevalence in SGBV in all its forms

**DELIBERATED AND HEREIN COMMIT: -**

- To continue accelerating our efforts to ending Sexual and Gender Based Violence in all the one hundred and fourteen districts of Zambia through community-centered targeted awareness raising and sensitization on the different manifestation of violence;
- To continue mobilizing the general citizenry, in particular women and girls and youths to speak out against all forms of social, economic and political injustices in defense of their livelihoods.

**SEVERALLY AND INDIVIDUALLY RESOLVE: -**

- To forthwith form the Zambia National Network Against Sexual and Gender Based Violence (ZNAS)

**NOW HENCEFORTH CALL OURSELVES TO ACTION WITH PARTICULAR FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING THEMATIC AREAS:**

**The role of culture and tradition in SGBV**

- The need to promote cultural and traditional practices that address SGBV
- The need to outlaw cultural and traditional practices that perpetuate SGBV in Zambia
- Need to enhance practices that promote women's access to and control over productive resources including land
- The need to reorient traditional counselors to give age-appropriate information to girls and boys
- Traditional ceremonies shall be utilized as platforms in the fight against SGBV

**Religion and SGBV**

- All churches shall dedicate time within their services and operations to preach on ending SGBV
- The Church to curb the culture of silence especially issues related to SGBV
- Introduce religious curriculum on SGBV to the different groups within the church
- Religion to promote the reporting of the many SGBV cases to the relevant authorities
- There is need for increased collaboration between the Religious bodies and other key stakeholders and players involved in addressing SGBV
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**Legal and policy environment and justice**

The government should:

- undertake measures to ensure that people are made aware of their rights and responsibilities in ending SGBV
- develop a comprehensive national policy to address SGBV in institutions and organizations in both the private and public sector
- increase budget allocation for implementation SGBV laws and policies
- build capacity of key service providers who include health, judiciary and law enforcement officers for improved SGBV case management
- harmonise SGBV related laws to protect survivors of SGBV including providing a uniform definition of a child and age for marriage in line with the Constitution of Zambia

### **Supporting change agents in addressing SGBV**

- Urge Cooperating partners to support holistic interventions on ending SGBV
- Commit to mainstream SGBV in all their programmes and activities
- Strengthen the coordination and joint CSO advocacy interventions
- Strengthen SGBV prevention messaging by focusing on preventing SGBV
- Strengthen engagement of strategic partners such as corporating partners and private sector in addressing SGBV
- Offer broad therapeutic services to both survivors and perpetrators
- Build capacity of media personnel to uphold media ethics and embrace gender responsive reporting on SGBV
- Ensure all interventions are inclusive of all stakeholders such as the youth, elderly and persons with disability
- Community based interventions should also target the family level
- Strengthen data collection in order to have evidence based interventions
- impart knowledge on children at an early age through the introduction of SGBV curriculum in the education system
- promote economic empowerment for girls and women to protect them from being vulnerable to SGBV
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### **Politics and SGBV**

- Adopt zero tolerance to political violence and SGBV
- commit to be the voice of reason in spreading the word on SGBV and ending political violence through structures such as the Women and Youth Wings of Political Parties
- urge political parties to come to a round table to discuss impasse on the political scene
- urge the Media to be more proactive in their reporting on political violence and SGBV
- Urge the women's movement to condemn all forms of political violence and SGBV

**We the various stakeholders and actors have been reinvigorated and have been strengthened by each other's experiences and aspirations to continue to address Sexual and Gender Based Violence with renewed vigor and in a collective manner.**

**Hereunder signed:**