



Zimbabwe

ZIMBABWE'S REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON WOMEN INTRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS (A/RES/77/194).

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) has demonstrated its commitment to protecting the rights of women and girls through ratification of international and regional conventions and treaties on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The adoption of these regional and international conventions presents an opportunity for the member states to learn from best practices and to bench mark itself against the regional and international standards and ensuring that policies and programmes are aligned towards the achievement of this goal.

Trafficking of women and girls has been a challenge globally and Zimbabwe is not spared from this challenge. The situation is exacerbated by other contributing factors such as climate change and emergencies and disasters which magnifies the poverty levels in the country thereby exposing many people to the risk of being trafficked in the pretext of getting better prospects for employment. The COVID 19 pandemic and other humanitarian situations have presented challenges which have resulted in loss of income by many families especially women who constitute the bulk of the informal sector that is often hard hit by these incidences.

The government of Zimbabwe has remained alive to this challenge and a number of interventions have been put in place to mitigate the challenges of trafficking of women and girls.

In this report, the Government of Zimbabwe presents the progress made in implementing the General Assembly Resolution on Trafficking in Women and girls (A/RES/77/194).

1. **Policy reforms on trafficking;** Government of Zimbabwe embarked on the process of amending the Trafficking in Persons (TiP) Act [*Chapter 9:25*]. In the amendment the proposed definition of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) will include all the elements of the offence namely; act, means and

purpose. Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receiving of persons will be defined as punishable acts. For the purpose of the offense, fraud, use of force, threats or other forms of coercion will be regarded as the means. The term exploitation will also be amended to include: all forms of slavery or practice similar to slavery, sexual exploitation, prostitution, child and adult pornography, debt bondage, servitude, forced labour, begging and forced begging, criminal purposes, child labour, unlawful removal of body organs, forced marriages and impregnation of female person against her will for the purpose of selling her child when the child is born. The definition of TiP will therefore be duly aligned to the 2000 Palermo Protocol.

- 2. Addressing root causes that lead to exploitation;** One of the major push factors for trafficking among women and girls is poverty. To address this challenge government has put in place a wide range of economic empowerment initiatives for women and girls. GoZ is promoting financial inclusion for women by availing financial packages to women through the following packages; Providing funding to women's groups in the form of loans through the Women's Development Fund (WDF). The fund targets women groups at grassroots level in various sectors of the economy that include agriculture, mining, manufacturing, trade, arts and craft. The objective of the fund is to increase participation of women in mainstream economic activities. From 2022 to 2023 government supported 350 women groups through this fund and had Direct beneficiaries.

To enhance women's access to finance and credit GoZ through the ZWMB is offering a wide range of financial packages to women which include loans, asset financing, investment and savings. These are offered with minimum interest rates and flexible borrowing conditions with little collateral requirements. The financial packages have enabled women to build the capacity of their businesses.

In addition to provision of financing, government of Zimbabwe has provided skills training to women and girls to enhance efficiency of running their income generating activities. From 2022 a total of 44527 women have been capacitated across the country.

Realising the needs of women entrepreneurs, government in partnership with UN Women has embarked on a drive to establish safe markets across the country. The safe markets are designed to respond to the practical gender needs of women by providing them with spaces for selling their products, storerooms, gender sensitive ablution

facilities as well as children's play centre. These markets enable women to carry out their economic merchandise while their children are playing in a safe environment.

- 3. Measures to address risk factors caused by crises and emergencies:** Zimbabwe like any other country has not been spared by the impact of climate change coupled with emergencies such as cyclones and the COVID 19 pandemic. Climate change has adversely affected agricultural yields which have been a major source of income for rural households. The unavailability of income has pushed many to look for alternative sources of income and in the process fall victim to trafficking. To mitigate these challenges government has put in place interventions to promote rural women agricultural initiatives through implementation of smart agriculture. The project has benefitted 3,5 million farmers of which 54% are women for the period 2022 to 2023.

The COVID 19 lockdowns have resulted in loss of income among many citizens and especially those in the informal sector to which a lot of women belong. In a bid to help these informal sector business, government of Zimbabwe put in place the stimulus package stimulus package meant to cushion the SMEs from the adverse effects of the lockdowns that came with COVID 19 pandemic. A total amount of ZWL500 million was unveiled towards the economic recovery and stimulus package for SMEs.

- 4. Measures to address the risk presented by technology and digitalization:** The use of technology and access to social media negatively impact women as these platforms are sometimes used to lure women for trafficking. Government of Zimbabwe has enacted the cyber security and data protection act to protect women and girls from online abuse and transmission of offensive language.

To facilitate reporting of trafficking related GBV cases, the Government with support from the development partners has established the toll free line for accessing information on migration as well as reporting cases of trafficking and violence against women and girls.

- 5. Measures to increase access to justice, strengthen detection, protection of victims-survivors and prosecution of perpetrators:** In order to promote speedy processing of cases, the government has decentralised its court system to allow cases to be handled across the country while also reducing the movement by survivors to access justice services.

Government has established safe shelters for survivors of trafficking. Currently there are two shelters where victims of trafficking are housed in waiting for reintegration with their families. To regulate and standardise operations of these shelters, government is in the process of developing standard operating procedures for them.

There have been capacity building workshops for stakeholders to enhance detection of cases of trafficking and ensuring that such cases are reported.

6. Multi-sectoral services for victims-survivors of trafficking:

Government has established an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Trafficking in Persons comprising of stakeholders from different line Ministries and agencies. The role of the Committee is to ensure a multi sectoral response to trafficking and prevention of trafficking in persons by raising awareness among citizens.