



Zimbabwe

ZIMBABWE'S REPORT ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (A/RES/77/181).

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) remains committed to the eradication of violence against women and girls. The adoption of regional and international instruments presents itself as a show of commitment by the member state towards the elimination of violence against women and girls. It is a commitment to ensuring policies and strategies are in place to address Gender Based Violence and Harmful Practices and to ensure they are aligned to the achievement of these regional and international conventions and protocols.

The COVID 19 pandemic and other humanitarian situations have presented challenges in combating Gender Based Violence but they have also become opportunities to embrace new and innovative ways of dealing with the scourge.

In this report, the Government of Zimbabwe presents its report on the progress made in implementing the General Assembly Resolution on Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: gender stereotypes and negative social norms” (A/RES/75/161 and A/RES/77/193).

- 1.0. **Measures to address violence against women and girls;** Government of Zimbabwe has put in place policy measures to address Gender Based Violence. The National Gender Policy which is a national policy document guiding implementation of gender equality initiatives has been reviewed and it has a whole section dedicated to Gender Based Violence in its various forms including emerging issues on violence against women. Government has also developed the National Strategy for Preventing and addressing Gender Based Violence which gives an implementation guiding framework to all partners on addressing GBV. The strategy covers 7 thematic areas including GBV in emergencies and humanitarian situations. Government has also developed the multi sectoral protocol on the Management of sexual abuse and violence for the management of sexual violence cases.
- 1.1. GoZ working with CSOs is carrying out community-based campaigns to raise awareness on violence against women, gender equality and Harmful Practices. The campaigns are targeting policy makers, traditional leaders, religious leaders and community leaders with

the objective of raising awareness on gender related issues affecting women and children such as child marriages with the motive of preventing and appropriately responding to cases of violence against women and girls. Awareness raising is done through policy dialogues, capacity building of stakeholders, media campaigns and engagement of community leaders to discuss issues.

- 1.2. Climate change has negatively impacted families and the effects have led to increases in sexual and gender based violence as individuals and families attempt to cope with the effects of climate change. Recognizing this vice and the vulnerability of women and girls who in most cases are significantly affected when disasters and emergencies occur. Capacity building of frontline responders to disasters and emergencies have been carried out targeting the districts at high risk of disasters. The trainings included GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse prevention as well as gender sensitive interventions during disasters and emergencies. A total of 16 districts have been capacitated out of 64 districts. Government wishes to expand these capacity building initiatives to all the districts in the country.
- 2.0. **Generating data and research on violence against women and girls;** Collection and Management of data is key in GBV interventions, government has started the process of establishing a Gender Based Violence Information Management System. The system has been developed and approximately 300 stakeholders have been trained on utilization of the platform. The system is yet to be finalized and rolled out across the country to ensure all stakeholders can feed into this data management system.
 - 2.1. The country does not have a centralized GBV Information Management System (IMS). The government is working on coming up with a standardized methodology for the generation, storage, analysis, sharing and use of SGBV survey and administrative data and to have the Management Information System (MIS) that is comprehensive and inter operable by all stakeholders.
- 3.0. **Strengthening of laws, policies, regulatory frameworks, and accountability;** In order to address the challenge of online Gender Based Violence, Government of Zimbabwe has put in place the Cyber and Data Protection Act which protects individuals against online gender based violence. The Act provides for the lawful use of technology and allows for investigations in matters of cyber-crime and unauthorised data collection and breaches, and to provide for admissibility of electronic evidence for such offences. The Act therefore criminalises online Gender Based Violence and allows investigation officers to utilise online evidence for prosecution of perpetrators of Gender Based Violence, which has been a silent matter over the years.
- 4.0. **Expanding services to support survivors and improving access to justice;** Government of Zimbabwe in partnership with development partners and Civil Society Organisations has established GBV response services across the country to ensure that survivors have access to comprehensive services. A total of 7 One Stop Centres and 19 shelters have been established in the country. These institutions provide comprehensive GBV services and offer temporary shelter to survivors while cases will be finalized.

- 4.1. The COVID 19 pandemic has seen a sharp increase in GBV cases and limited access to the justice system. To mitigate these challenges, government of Zimbabwe in partnership with Civil Society Organisations embarked on a drive to bring GBV services to the hard to reach communities who have been facing mobility challenges, thus the mobile One Stop Centre concept was taken to rural communities to enable survivors to access comprehensive services within their communities and also to raise awareness on the availability of such services. A total of 5 862 survivors were assisted through the Mobile One Stop Centre initiative.
- 4.2. Government managed to provide transport services to GBV survivors to enable them to access services. The initiative saw 3145 survivors of Gender Based Violence accessing services within the stipulated time for reporting. However the initiative lacked a sustainability plan and with the end of the Spotlight Initiative programme the intervention discontinued. During its implementation many of the survivors from the rural communities were able to access services.
- 5.0. **Investing in long term prevention to transform social norms and behaviours;** In order to addressing the root causes of violence against women, government is engaging traditional and religious leaders with the objective of challenging social, cultural and religious practices and norms that perpetuate gender inequalities and promote Gender Based violence. A total of 369 traditional and religious leaders have been reached through the sub national dialogues on GBV and Harmful Practices.
- 5.1. Following these engagements the traditional leaders have gone further to establish local policies and laws for addressing GBV and Harmful Practices. they have come up with Civil fines for perpetrators of child marriages and these fines are used to establish a community based fund which is used to provide support to girls that would have dropped out of school due to marriage or pregnancy. Such girls are supported to return to school or to engage in vocational skills training.
- 5.2. The government has also put in place empowerment funds for women. These funds are given to grassroots women to start and improve their income generating activities. Government through the relevant Ministry has established a fund for women known as the Women Development Fund, which provide loans to grassroots women entrepreneurs. The fund has provided loans to 281 women groups between 2021 and 2023.
- 5.3. Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) has embarked on skills training for women entrepreneurs in an endeavour to equip them with the requisite skills for undertaking their enterprises. In 2023 a total of 44527 women have been capacitated across the country.
- 5.4. 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.

5.5. These initiatives have enabled women to become economically independent and empower them to challenge some social and cultural practices that infringe on their rights and perpetuate their subservience role. The economic empowerment initiatives have significantly influenced women's perceptions on Gender Based Violence and empowered that to openly speak against such violence.

6.0. **Investing in innovation and technology to create safe online spaces, prevention, reporting and protection mechanisms;** Access to technology for women and girls is critical to enabling their access to information including gender based violence related information. Government of Zimbabwe in partnership with UN Agencies and Civil Society Organisations has put in place technology and information centres for women and girls. These centres are equipped with ICT gadgets and have internet access to enable women and girls to utilise these gadgets to access information on issues like violence against women, sexual and reproductive health, empowerment opportunities and educational opportunities among other issues. The centres also enable women and girls to participate in national, regional and international conventions through the various online platforms and thereby keeping them updated with information on gender equality and women empowerment.

6.1. In order to facilitate speedy reporting and access to services, Government of Zimbabwe working with other stakeholders has established toll free lines for reporting of GBV cases. The toll free lines have enabled survivors to access services promptly and they have also facilitated for follow ups by service providers. Since 2022 a total of 2265 verified cases of which 92% were from women have been reported through the toll free lines.

6.2. Government of Zimbabwe has established the Intergrated Electronic Case Management System (IECMS). The IECMS integrates five features in one platform, and these are the electronic filing of documents (e-filing), electronic payment of court fees (e-payment), virtual court hearing platform, the online tracking of court cases and Internet access to judgements. This initiative has alleviated the burden of travelling by state witnesses which has been a great impediment in access to justice.