

Concept Document



25 November - 10 December

1. Background

The 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children is a United Nations campaign. It takes place annually from 25 November (International Day of No Violence against Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day). Since 1999 the South African Government has run a parallel campaign that includes issues relating to violence against children. This campaign focuses primarily on generating an increased awareness of the negative impact of violence on women and children as well as society as a whole.

The National Convener for the Campaign is the Deputy Minister of the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) Ms Nomatyala Hanganana. The vision of the Deputy Minister is that the campaign is taken to the people at grass roots level and beyond the borders of South Africa. DPLG, as the lead department, is working closely with the Special Programmes Directorate in the Presidency as well as other government departments. In addition, strategic partnerships between government, civil society and business, have been established to broaden the potential impact of the campaign.

The Local government policy and legislative framework creates an enabling environment for gender equality, empowerment and the participation of women and other disadvantaged groups in developmental initiatives.

The White Paper on Local Government (1998), the Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (No 17 of 1998), the Local Government Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (No 32 of 2000), and the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, 2003 (No 41 of 2003) constitute part of the policy and legislative environment within which local government transformation takes place. These mechanisms specify measures to advance women's leadership, development and quality of life.

Cabinet approved South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in 2002. The Gender Policy Framework outlines South Africa's vision for gender equality, its overarching principles and defines the terms of reference for various stakeholders in the development and implementation of sectoral policies and programmes. Government departments are therefore required to develop their own policies in line with the national framework.

During the 2004 Campaign, President Thabo Mbeki reiterated that the Campaign should be extended to 365 days of action against Gender-Based violence. As a result of this the 16 days of Activism campaign will spread its activities over a period of 365 days in order to enhance the campaigns effectiveness.

The year 2006 marks the 16th anniversary of the 16 Days of Activism campaign. International instruments that support the campaign include: The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action which are both endorsed by South Africa.

In the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region the campaign has gained significant momentum through the adoption of the Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children by the SADC Heads of State in the year 1998.

2. Campaign Vision

An effective 16 Days of Activism Campaign that translates into sustainable 365 Days of Action to end violence against women and children within a coordinated system of government and through partnerships with all spheres of government.

3. The Campaign's Objectives

- To generate an increased level of awareness amongst South Africans pertaining to the incidence of violence perpetuated against women and children, how it manifests itself within South African society and the negative impact on these vulnerable groups;
- To challenge perpetrators of these offences to change their behaviour;
- To enhance and increase partnerships between government, the private sector, civil society, organised labour, sectoral groups, faith based organisations, the media (electronic and print) and the diplomatic community in an effort to spread the message;
- To align events in the national programme with that of the international theme for this year, which focuses on matters relating to Women's Human Rights, 16 years of 16 days campaign and the rights of children
- To raise funds for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), Community Based Organisations (CBO's) and Faith Based Organisations (FBO's) that work within the sector, providing invaluable support to the victims and survivors of violence;
- To communicate through the most effective and appropriate channels aiming to reach the maximum number of people across the country, particularly women and children residing in the rural areas;
- To engage actively with men and boys in the discourse about combating violence in our homes, our communities and in the workplace;
- To highlight the stories of survivors of gender-based violence and the impact that the campaign has had on their lives; and
- To broaden the campaign beyond the South African borders.

4. The Campaign Mechanism

South Africans are called to support the campaign by utilising the white ribbon symbol in innovative and inventive ways to reflect solidarity. By wearing these ribbons for the duration of the year with specific emphasis on the 16-day period, employers and employees will provide an effective and striking visual tool through which to elicit campaign support. Unions and professional organisations will also be encouraged to garner support within their ranks alongside members and representatives from the sporting fraternity.

5. Government's Calendar of Events

National, Provincial and Local Government representatives in the National Gender Machinery prepare sector-specific, rural-and urban-based activities for the campaign. This information is fed into a national calendar of events, overseen and managed by the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS).

6. Communication Strategy

GCIS and the broader media play a key strategic role in developing communication strategies and plans for the campaign.

The interventions include a combination of formal advertising slots with public service announcements, participation in talk shows, magazine programmes and media information sessions. Radio advertising, targeting the various regions and specific language groups will form the backbone of the broader outreach programme.

7. Participating Companies, Parastatals and NGOs

Participating partners will be requested to feature the campaign logo extensively in internal publications and correspondence, on their websites and in messaging to their clients.

They will also be asked to feature the campaign logo on product adverts and as part of their individual advertising campaigns. Corporate donations will be sought to augment the fundraising initiative on behalf of NGOs working with victims and survivors of violence.

Employers and employees will be encouraged to support the white ribbon campaign and to source their white ribbons (beaded, ceramic or lint fabric) from women's empowerment groups that supply these lapel buttons, pins and ribbons. A database of preferred service providers has been compiled.

8. Campaign Impact

The combination of Government, business and civil society activities and interventions, the envisaged saturation of media coverage via advertising, public service announcements, interviews and editorial pronouncements in conjunction with the extensive education campaign will undoubtedly contribute to a heightened national awareness of the issues related to violence and the importance of integrated solutions to the problem.

9. Call to Action

The rights of women and children are fundamental human rights entrenched in and protected by the Constitution. They are thus inalienable from, integral to and indivisible from the human rights framework. Gender-based violence in all its different guises is incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person, and must be eliminated.

10. Implementation

Ward Committees: The DPLG is equipped with the resources to reach all communities of South Africa at grass roots level. In most cases those most affected by violence are in these areas and are usually not aware of the resources and services available to them to help them cope with their circumstances.

DPLG is able to reach these groups through our ward committees who can utilise their resources and plan activities to reach this target group. Programmes can be developed to include this group in activities and offer a service to them.

11. Budget

The DPLG is to provide funding for the operation of the campaign in partnership with other government departments and stakeholders in the realisation of the broader activities of the campaign. Hosting Provinces will be requested via the Presidency to assist in the funding of the opening and closing ceremonies while Government Communication and Information Systems (GCIS) will fund all media and communication costs.

Fundraising initiatives are to be implemented in order to raise funds from business and private organisations to support activities and campaign projects that enhance service delivery directed at victims of abuse.