

DRAFT CONCEPT PAPER NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Synopsis

This concept paper is for a multi-sector initiative to build on the momentum generated by the Sixteen Days of Activism on No Violence against Women and Children through concretising a national action plan to end gender violence.

This campaign, observed globally, has been given considerable impetus in Southern Africa through the adoption by SADC Heads of State in 1998 of the Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children following a conference in Durban convened by the Department of Justice.

Each year the campaign in South Africa has extended its reach and impact. However, questions have been raised as to how the momentum of this important high profile campaign is sustained the whole year around. During the course of nationwide consultations that took place during the 2005 campaign, including cyber dialogues hosted by the Government Communication and Information Services (GCIS) in all provinces, the idea of a national action plan to end violence against women and children gained ground and was endorsed by the Deputy President in her closing speech of the campaign.

2006 is significant for a number reasons: The year marks the:

- 50th anniversary of the women's march to the Union Buildings.
- 30 years of the Soweto uprising.
- Ten years of the constitution which enshrines gender equality, women's and children's rights.
- Sixteen years of the sixteen days.

The aim of the conference to be held from **3-5 May 2006** is to concretise a programme of action for a much more coordinated and comprehensive national response for addressing gender-based violence. The conference will identify actions to be taken by all stakeholders to give effect to the rights of women and children as enshrined in the Constitution, as well as timeframes, roles and responsibilities for achieving this; input and output indicators. This road map will enhance the annual Sixteen Day campaigns by showing how the commitments will be sustained and acted upon the whole year around, including through other important dates in the calendar such as (this year) the 30 years of the Soweto uprising on 16 June and the 50th anniversary of the women's march on 9 August.

Background

Gender equality and women's rights have been championed at the highest level since the advent of democracy in 1994. Several progressive steps have been taken to end gender violence. These include: comprehensive legislation; specialised services; institutional mechanisms; and public awareness initiatives. Each year the Sixteen Days of Activism presents an opportunity to heighten awareness; renew commitments to ending all forms of violence and cement partnerships between civil society, government, the private sector and development partners.

In the eight years that the campaign has been observed in South Africa and the sub-region, the costs of gender based violence across all sectors; its undermining effect

on development and shared growth have become increasingly and painfully apparent. Every sphere and sector is affected and has a critical role to play. It is clear that the only way to make headway in ending this scourge is through a concerted collaborative approach.

During the 2005 campaign, proposals for the content of actions to be included in a national action plan to end gender violence evolved through the hundreds of local level consultations including cyber dialogues hosted at multi purposes centres in all provinces. These actions emanated from an audit of actions taken to date based on the SADC Addendum for the Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children as well as the AU Solemn Declaration on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality wherein heads of state pledged to monitor each others progress in advancing the status of women.

In a speech during the 2005 Sixteen Days Campaign, the President made it clear that how the nation responds to gender violence goes to the heart of who we are and how we see ourselves as a nation. Closing the campaign on International Human Rights day (also the International Day of Commitments on No Violence Against Women) in 2005, the Deputy President pledged her support for a National Action Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children.

National, regional and global significance

By adopting a comprehensive plan to end violence against women and children, South Africa will break new ground in its endeavour to make South Africa and Africa a better place for all its people. It will demonstrate how the SADC Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children can be used as a mechanism to ensure that effective action is taken by all sectors of society and how these sectors can hold each other accountable. The plan would also demonstrate how, through cooperative governance, the nation can overcome the daily violation of the rights of a significant proportion of the population that undermines the many achievements of our democracy.

Objectives

To adopt and implement a comprehensive, multi sector strategy and plan for ending violence against women and children through:

1. Agreeing on short term actions and indicators that stakeholders will commit to undertaking this year within the framework of a longer term strategy to end gender violence within the context of the SADC Addendum on the prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children.
2. Aligning key indicators that will be used as the basis for benchmarking progress during review sessions at the national, sub regional and international level as well during the annual Sixteen day campaign processes.
3. Creating mechanisms to ensure co-ordination and sustained momentum.
4. Ensuring that all sectors of society (government, civil society and the private sector) are held accountable for the commitments they make.

Scope

This initiative involves:

1. All government clusters, though the leadership of the JCPS cluster and the Ministry of Provincial and Local Government, as champions of the Sixteen Day Campaign.

2. An operational steering committee comprising the Inter Departmental Task Team (IDMT) led by the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) that has joined forces with representatives of civil society and is being aligned with the inter departmental committee established to coordinate the Sixteen Day campaign.
3. The convening of a two and half day conference: "National Action plan to End Violence Against Women and Children" from 3-5 May 2006.
4. A multi prong communication strategy to engage all sectors.
5. The adoption of a National Action Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children.
6. The establishment of collaborative structures to ensure that the initiative is sustained.

Theme areas to be covered

The major theme areas to be covered are:

1. Legislation and policy
2. Criminal justice system
3. Specialised facilities
4. Comprehensive treatment and care
5. Infrastructure and places of safety
6. Prevention, education and awareness
7. Coordination
8. Economic empowerment
9. Gender violence in the workplace
10. Children

Stakeholders

The conference aims to bring together approximately 200 delegates from across the country from the following categories:

- National, provincial and local government.
- The legislature, especially Portfolio committees on Justice and the Committee on the Quality of Life and Status of Women.
- The judiciary.
- Chapter Nine Institutions
- Civil society- union, Non governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Faith Based Organisations (FBOs)
- The arts and sports community.
- Traditional leaders.
- The media.
- The private sector.
- Donors.

Administrative arrangements and sponsorship

The administrative arrangements for the conference are being managed by the NPA with the assistance of Gender Links, one of the NGOs in the operational committee. Sponsorship is being provided by the NPA, Gender Links and the UN agencies through UNICEF. In kind support is sought from government through sponsoring travel for government officials from the provinces (these delegations are being constituted by the provincial OSWs) and the GCIS (in designing and implementing a communications strategy).

Outputs

- National Action Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children.

- A coordinating structure to ensure that the momentum of this concerted national campaign is sustained.

Outcomes

- Enhancing the annual Sixteen Day Campaign through a multi-sector, multi-stakeholder plan to ensure that commitments made are acted upon during the course of the year.
- Clear reduction, over time, in the incidence of gender violence.
- Easily accessible and dignified services for survivors of gender violence.
- Rehabilitation of perpetrators.
- A society in which women and men are able to realise their full human potential in both their public and private lives.

