

DEVELOPMENT WATCH

Civil Society
National Indicative Program
Monitoring
and
Advocacy

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RESPONDING TO OMICRON: A LOCAL'S RESIDENT'S EXPERIENCE



MERRY
christmas



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Dear Reader

Greetings from the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations. The journey has not been easy this year with the Covid-19 pandemic affecting our lifestyle throughout this year. However, I am proud of how far we have come as a nation as we find ways to adapt to the global pandemic. We have continued with our educational role with all our issues having at least one article looking at the Covid-19 pandemic, its impact, and other information related to the virus.

As we come near to the end of this year, I am proud to present our 13th publication, Volume 3, Issue 13 of Development Watch. We are now tying up the year 2021 looking back at what we have all achieved so far this year. This issue illustrates both the diversity and our capacity to address pressing issues in a timely way. The newsletter has a variety of topics to cover different elements of issues

within Civil Society and the country at large.

We hope you take the time to read what the contents of the newsletter have to offer. There is so much to read, so much to ponder, and so much more to know because like we always say, we are truly, after all, still learning.

As we celebrate this festive holiday, let us not get overexcited and forget that the pandemic is still here with us. Let us continue to follow World Health Organisations (WHO) and government covid-19 regulations. Let us put our health first. In this regard, we further encourage Zimbabweans to get vaccinated as it helps our fight against this deadly virus.

In the spirit of a festive holiday, let us also continue with our fight against Gender-Based Violence. Christmas is a period of love, celebration and just spending quality time with our families, relatives and friends hence I hope that everyone will have a blissful festive holiday. To those who will be travelling, let us abide by our road regulations and minimise loss of life during this festive holiday.

At this juncture allow me to wish you all a Merry Christmas!

Stay Safe and Mask Up!

Mr Leonard Mandishara
Executive Director
NANGO

Designed By
Chris Katsaura



Christmas Holidays **Closure Notice**

Please Note that our offices will be closed on Monday, December 20th up to Sunday, January 9th.

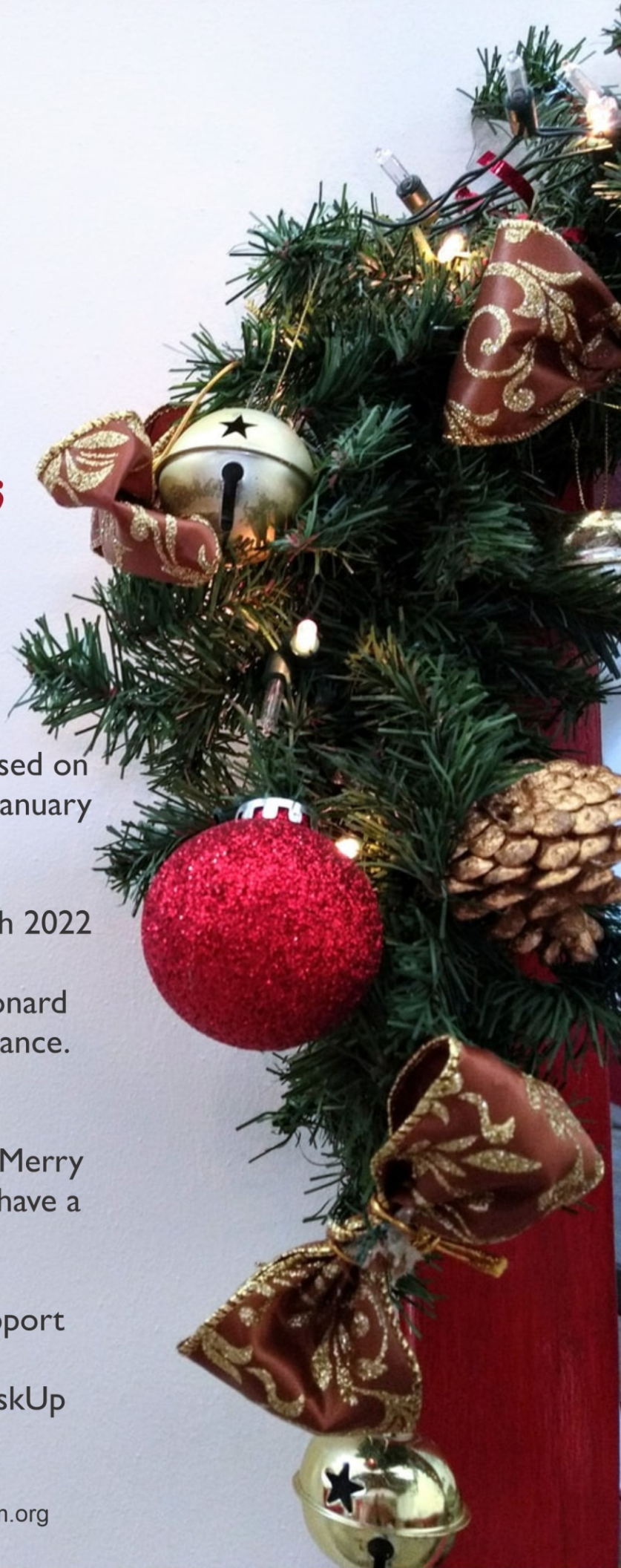
We will reopen on Monday, January 10th 2022

During this time, you may contact Leonard Mandishara for any enquiries or assistance.
Cell: +263717401832.

We would like to take this time to say Merry Christmas and we hope everyone will have a Happy New Year.

We thank you for your continued support

Lets not forget to #StaySafe and #MaskUp



RESPONDING TO OMICRON: A LOCAL'S RESIDENT'S EXPERIENCE

By Staff Reporter

Section 50 read with Section 53 of the Public Health Act allows the Minister of Health and Child Care to make regulations for the notification of infectious diseases, the isolation, hospitalisation, and quarantine of infected persons. Through Statutory Instrument 200 of 2020, in s21, the Minister gave local authorities powers to set up places of quarantine for persons infected with Covid-19. During the first lockdowns in 2020, spaces to house the infected were not available, neither were there funds to capacitate health facilities to support infected persons and medical health practitioners. Reports were often of people being turned away from hospitals and being required to undergo isolation and quarantine at home.

In the first week of December, a local Bulawayo resident was left urgently seeking legal advice when her daughter had tested positive for Covid-19 during the panic shortly after the announcement of the new Omicron variant. Her daughter was almost forcibly removed from their home in Newton West where she was undergoing treatment in isolation. The woman shares a 5 bedroomed house with her

22-year-old daughter. The local Covid-19 task force team came for a seemingly routine contact tracing visit but later returned with an ambulance stating that they had orders to remove the young lady from the premises and place her in one of their quarantine sites. In Bulawayo, the isolation centers are currently Thorngrove Hospital and Ekusileni. The mother refused and quickly sought legal advice from a local legal practitioner Thobekile Sithole. Ms. Sithole made a follow-up with the lead of the task force team, who advised that they were acting according to s53 of the Public Health Act which allowed for the removal to hospitals of infected persons. The section states that where, in the opinion of the medical officer of health, any person certified by a medical practitioner to be suffering from an infectious disease is not accommodated or is not being treated or nursed in such manner as adequately to guard against the spread of the disease, they may be detained until they are no longer a danger to the public.

Although this is a new response by the task team particularly in Bulawayo, one wonders whether in this circumstance where the young lady was in isolation and lived only with her mother and was therefore not an immediate source of

danger to the public the response was appropriate or necessary. There was an expectation for the guardian to ask for an exception given the circumstances, however, ordinary citizens do not have easy access to legal practitioners, nor are they aware of the provisions of the Public Health Act or specific provisions in published statutory instruments relating to Covid-19. They therefore would not know that they have leeway to ask for exceptions.

The Act also provides that the cost of the removal and maintenance of such patients may be recovered by the local authority from the said patient or his or her estate or, in the case of a minor, from his or her parent or guardian if it appears to the local authority that the patient can meet such costs. This provision poses a challenge as the local authority determines whether the patient can afford it without outlining the baselines used. The local authorities may therefore unnecessarily burden an already impoverished society with medical bills. This could be avoided by allowing those in conducive environments to remain in their homes. The Bulawayo Taskforce team lead advised that her team had already picked up 19 patients in and around Bulawayo and ferried them to the local quarantine locations. Inquiries amongst several Whatsapp groups revealed that many people and organisations were not aware that these were the new measures being implemented.

Although measures taken to curb the spread of Covid-19 tend to err on the side of caution, the question of the proportionality of the responses cannot be ignored. Through SI 119 of 2021, the Minister of Health and Care announced that persons entering Zimbabwe with proof of a valid PCR negative certificate shall still be required to self-quarantine for 10 days. These measures are extreme and disadvantage many who had made plans to travel for the upcoming Christmas holidays. Some responses also perpetuate the panic mentality which has already gripped the world over as countries like the United Kingdom already banned flights and travellers from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana, and other southern African countries.

It is common knowledge that our health system is not in a condition to maintain these measures should the numbers spike, but it is more concerning that there is a move from turning away people from hospitals to forcibly trying to remove them from their homes without properly raising awareness to the public of the changes. The Covid-19 task force teams, therefore, run the risk of being met with resistance by those who are more willing to question authorities before submitting; and patients themselves may worry about the risk of re-infection and the standards of care at these facilities.

Government and local authorities are encouraged to utilise more proportionate responses that do not necessarily burden an already weakened health system or infringe upon people's rights; use discretion on a case to case basis; utilise alternative methods such as mobile teams to monitor and follow up on those isolating in homes, and to allow those who test negative at entry points to be allowed to spend the holidays with their families. The current measures will cause huge financial losses for tickets bought, holidays paid for, and now paying for hotels for quarantine despite being negative. The measures run the risk of deterring people from visiting Zimbabwe during the holidays; this may have a huge economic impact.

SYMPTOMS	DELTA	OMICRON	COLD	FLU
FEVER	COMMON	COMMON	RARE	COMMON
TIREDFNESS	SOMETIMES	COMMON	SOMETIMES	SOMETIMES
COUGH	COMMON	COMMON	MILD	COMMON
SNEEZING	NO	NO	COMMON	NO
ACHES/PAINS	SOMETIMES	COMMON	COMMON	COMMON
RUNNY NOSE	RARE	RARE	COMMON	SOMETIMES
SORE THROAT	SOMETIMES	COMMON	COMMON	SOMETIMES
DIARRHOEA	RARE	RARE	NO	SOMETIMES
HEADACHE	SOMETIMES	COMMON	RARE	COMMON

Table of Covid-19 omicron variant symptoms

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A glance into the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)



By Staff Reporter

Background of the IMF

The International Monetary Fund originated in July 1944 at the United Nations Bretton Woods Conference in New Hampshire, United States. The 44 countries in attendance sought to build a framework for international economic cooperation and avoid repeating the competitive currency devaluations that contributed to the Great Depression of the 1930s. The IMF's primary mission is to ensure the stability of the international monetary system, the system of exchange rates, and international payments that enable countries and their citizens to transact with each other. The IMF has a role of offering loans to member countries that are experiencing actual or potential balance of payments problems is a core responsibility of the IMF, to help member countries build better economic institutions and strengthen related human capacities.

What are Special Drawing Rights?

SDRs were created by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1969 to supplement the stock of official reserves. The original intent of the program was to revitalise the dying Bretton Woods system by altering the composition of international reserves between the scarce quantity of monetary gold and the abundant stock of dollar liabilities the initial allocation of SDR 9 billion over the 1970-72 period failed to achieve this objective. To date, a total of SDR 660.7 billion (equivalent to about US\$943 billion) have been

allocated, this includes the largest-ever allocation of about SDR 456 billion approved on August 2, 2021 (effective on August 23, 2021). This most recent allocation was to address the long-term global need for reserves, and help countries cope with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The value of the SDR is based on a basket of five currencies which are the U.S. dollar, the euro, the Chinese renminbi, the Japanese yen, and the British pound sterling.

The value of the SDRs is determined by a basket of currencies. The SDR value in terms of the U.S. dollar is determined daily based on the spot exchange rates observed at around noon London time and is posted on the IMF website. Currencies included in the SDR basket have to meet two criteria which are the export criterion and the freely usable criterion. A currency meets the export criterion if its issuer is an IMF member or a monetary union that includes IMF members, and is also one of the top five world exporters. For a currency to be determined “freely usable” by the IMF, it has to be widely used to make payments for international transactions and widely traded in the principal exchange markets. Freely usable currencies can be used in Fund financial transactions.

The SDRs can be merited for providing rapid unconditional liquidity, supplementing reserves at a lower cost than alternatives, does not contribute to excess global imbalances, does not entail immediate rollover risk, helps avoid economic stagnation and deflation, and unlikely to generate global excess demand and inflation given the large negative global output gap.

SDRs also have macroeconomic benefits which comprise boosting global reserves and resilience, sending a powerful signal of a cooperative multilateral response, instilling global confidence, smooths needed adjustment, and avoiding contractionary and distortionary policies in liquidity-constrained countries.

How SDRs can be converted into usable funds?

- SDRs may be used directly to pay IMF obligations in SDRs or may be exchanged for freely usable currency.
- Voluntary Trading Arrangements (VTAs) are intermediated by the Fund and handle most SDR transactions. VTAs are arrangements between the Fund and a group of 31 SDR participants and one prescribed holder who has agreed to exchange SDRs for specific currencies within set trading limits. A participant or a prescribed holder may use SDRs, without the requirement of a balance of payments. Participants and prescribed holders can also enter into bilateral transactions with each other, which is less common.
- In an event that there are insufficient voluntary buyers of SDRs, IMF can designate members with a strong balance of payment positions to provide freely usable currency in exchange for SDRs.
- SDR participants with strong external positions are required to provide freely usable currencies against SDRs from Fund members with a balance of payment needs.

Why is the increase in SDR allocation being advocated?

COVID-19 crisis is now likely inflicting long-term scars on the global economy: weakened external positions in many countries raised external financing needs, exacerbated debt vulnerabilities, and deepened poverty and inequality.

The global adjustment process is expected to be prolonged with a global negative output gap persisting into the medium term amid higher liquidity and solvency risks. These weak global prospects impact the ability of countries to meet future reserve needs, supporting the case for the allocations.

The need to supplement members' international reserve assets has been based on standard indicators of reserve adequacy. The need can be considered global as long as a group of countries with reserve needs accounts for a

significant share of the global economy. An assessment for the long-term implies that SDR allocations or cancellations are not intended to respond to cyclical or short-term economic fluctuations. SDR allocations could be appropriate even if there are alternative ways to supplement reserve assets. An SDR allocation is one of several financing sources to meet the long-term global need for reserves.

Zimbabwean context on SDRs

In 2009, Zimbabwe was allocated SDR 262 million under the general allocation and SDR 66.4 million under the special one-time allocation provided by the Fourth Amendment to the Articles of Agreement. At the time of the 2009 allocations, Zimbabwe had arrears to the PRGT and predecessor Trusts totalling about SDR 89.4 million. Under a General Allocation, a participant's right to use SDRs cannot be suspended on account of arrears to the General Department or Fund Trusts. However, the Fourth Amendment provided for a limited exception to this principle of separation. The SDRs allocated under the Fourth Amendment to a participant with overdue repurchases and charges in the GRA, overdue principal and interest on loans in the SDA, overdue charges and assessments in the SDR Department, and overdue liabilities to the Fund as Trustee would not be made available to the participant, but rather would be deposited and held in an escrow account in the SDR Department. These SDRs would be released to the participant only upon the discharge of all such overdue obligations to the Fund. Therefore, only SDR 66.4 million allocated to Zimbabwe as special allocation was escrowed, though Zimbabwe's arrears to the PRGT and predecessor Trusts exceeded the amount of the special allocation.

Recommendations

- The Zimbabwean government should have a well-drafted budget for the utilisation of the special drawing rights funds for accountability's sake.
- The government of Zimbabwe should invest in sustainable development which herein positively impacts the macro and micro economy in the long run.

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Retained seed keeps farming alive in Zimbabwe

By Tawanda Makawa – *Independent writer on farming systems and sustainable development.*

Smallholder farmers are emerging as the panacea for Zimbabwe's long ailing agricultural sector, which, fortunately, is on a rebound due to factors that include the revitalisation of conservation agriculture, good rains, increased investment in the sector, and improved seed varieties.

Seed is the single most important input in crop production as it carries the genetic potential of the variety and determines the ultimate productivity of other inputs. In crop production, other inputs are there to exploit the maximum genetic potential of the seed. Therefore, the seed is and should always be the basic prerequisite of any food security scheme.

For Cleopas Table, 58 of Msengezi area in Chegutu district in Zimbabwe, iterated that the right choice of seeds means a bumper harvest for him and his family of five. He religiously practices organic farming, a concept that uses ecologically-based organic matter, crop rotation, and companion planting.

“I have been a farmer all my life and my success hinges on the choice of seeds I plant in the garden and field, coupled

with revolutionary farming practices. I use natural organic matter and do not apply chemical fertilisers which are harmful to soils and not good for nutrition”, says Table.

“In as much as we use tested and certified seeds, our farming lives depend on retained seeds which are readily available in communities, of a wider variety and produce nutritious crops good for human consumption. Certified crops give good harvests, but we feed the harvest to livestock as we consume crops from retained seeds”, added the organic farmer.

75% of seeds planted by Cleopas are retained, as 25% is certified. For most farmers in this natural region 2 to 3 of Zimbabwe, receiving an average rainfall of 500 to 1050mm, farming thrives when they mix certified and retained seeds.

In the food chain, the seed is the first link – and seed sovereignty is the foundation of food sovereignty. If farmers do not have their seeds or access to open-pollinated varieties that they can save, improve and exchange, they have no seed sovereignty – and consequently no food sovereignty.

Seed sovereignty includes the farmer's rights to save, breed, and exchange seeds, to have access to diverse open-source seeds which can be saved – and which are not patented,

genetically modified, owned, or controlled by emerging seed giants. It is based on reclaiming seeds and biodiversity as commons and the public good.

Seed companies agree that seed retention by farmers poses a significant threat to sustainable production. But is this true?

Successful farmers such as Cleopas face the threat of a ban on retained seed by the global seed companies through a protocol called the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants 1991 (UPOV91) which seeks to allow plant breeders to impose a patent-like intellectual property right over seeds.

Since time immemorial, African ancestors have retained seed for coming seasons and the practice continues and should continue for generations to come.

Retaining seed means scarce varieties do not disappear from fields.

Threats to seed sovereignty

Besides displacing and destroying diversity, UPOV 91 undermines seed sovereignty. Across the world, new seed laws are being introduced which enforce compulsory registration of seeds, thus making it impossible for small farmers to grow their diversity and forcing them into dependency on giant seed corporations. Corporations are also patenting climate resilient seeds evolved by farmers – thus robbing farmers of using their seeds and knowledge for climate adaptation.

Another threat to seed sovereignty is genetic contamination. Countries the world over are losing seeds because of contamination from engineered breeds. After contamination, biotech seed corporations sue farmers with patent infringement cases.

As a farmer's seed supply is eroded, and farmers become dependent on patented GMO seeds, the result is debt. Life in debt means small-scale farmers will bow to big corporates

making seeds.

Seeding control

Even as the disappearance of biodiversity and seed sovereignty creates a major crisis for agriculture and food security, corporations are pushing governments to use public money to destroy the public seed supply and replace it with unreliable non-renewable, patented seed – which must be bought each year.

In Zimbabwe, given the 1994 regulation for the protection of plant varieties forces the ailing state of our economy and lack of disposable income, most farmers cannot afford to buy certified seeds each farming season. Retained seed is coming in handy to fill the income gap.

Farmers need independence when it comes to seed selection for they know what works best for them. Given climate change, retained seeds are working in favour of farmers as they come at a low cost, and where germination fails or crop vigour is experienced, the loss won't be so high compared to certified seeds.

It is because of seed sovereignty and control that farming is thriving in Zimbabwe. Since August 2021, a consortium of four organisations comprising Zimbabwe Smallholder Organic Farmers Organization (ZIMSOFF), Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihood Technologies (SALT), Women and Land in Zimbabwe (WLZ), and the Farmers Association of Community self-Help Investment groups (FACHIG), with financial and technical support from the African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) have been involved in a series of conversations with smallholder farmers, traditional leaders, district and provincial stakeholders. The objective of the conversations was to bring to the attention of participants and solicit their views on the threats posed by UPOV 91 to Farmer Managed Seed Systems and to build their capacity to advocate for a more sustainable and healthier farming system based on seed and food sovereignty, agroecology and local resilience strategies.

Mukuru is one of the largest money transfer providers in Africa and a leading Next Generation Financial Services Platform that offers affordable and reliable financial services to the emerging consumer.

The foundation of our business was built by providing the continent's migrant diaspora with safe, convenient international money transfers. From this base we have grown a wide range of products and services that take their cue from our customers' needs and aspirations for greater financial security and a better life.

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As a fintech provider, Mukuru has underpinned its successful customer engagement strategy with the ability to 'speak the language' of its users and gain grassroots understanding of the unique pain points each consumer faces in each market. Our service leverages over 170 Mukuru Orange Booths and a partner network of over 500 locations to facilitate swift and secure USD cash remittances in Zimbabwe.

Mukuru has more recently expanded into business-to-person transfers, leveraging its extensive physical and digital value chain in Southern Africa to provide regional payroll, bill settlement and humanitarian aid services to organisations' within the NGO sector. It is fiercely committed to its corporate social responsibility across geographies, showing care for vulnerable persons through tailored customer journeys and support interventions.

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designed for scale, with our cash logistics and physical cash disbursement footprint able to respond rapidly to changes in remittance volumes or geographic reach.

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- Remittances provide a crucial contribution to developing countries' Gross National Income and balance of payments.
- Mukuru has a global best in class safety plan for its staff and customers, including a range of unique capabilities given its technology and scale.
- Proprietary AML and fraud-prevention software; committed to best practices and compliance with relevant rules and regulations.



FODPZ Statement On 16 Days of activism Against Gender-Based Violence

The Federation of Organizations of Disabled People in Zimbabwe (FODPZ), stands with the world in commemorating the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence campaign. Indeed, “Orange The World, End Violence Against Women Now!”

FODPZ represents the interests and concerns of persons with disabilities in Zimbabwe. Yes, if persons with disabilities are not healthy and safe, they cannot care for themselves, support their families or contribute to their communities. We want to specifically stand with women and girls with disabilities as they are more vulnerable and marginalized. According to UN Women, around one in five women has some form of disability. In most cases, persons with disabilities are treated as subhuman, and because of that, they often face a heightened risk of domestic and sexual violence. Unfortunately, too many existing programmes meant to prevent gender-based violence do not take into account the unique dangers and challenges faced by women with disabilities. Without specific attention and solutions, these women have been left behind and at risk. This has to change.

According to UN Women, Women with disabilities around the world experience much higher levels of physical, sexual, and psychological violence, for longer periods and with worse physical and mental outcomes as a consequence of violence than women without disabilities. The main factors for the additional vulnerability of women and girls with disabilities are:

Patriarchal attitudes: Attitudes towards women in patriarchal societies combined with vulnerabilities related to the impairment itself.

Powerlessness: The perceived powerlessness of women and girls with disabilities who are less able to defend themselves or seek support because of their isolation e.g. they may be hidden away, the nature of impairment leaves them isolated, or they may not recognise that what is happening is unacceptable and not their fault.

Poverty: There is a strong bidirectional link between

poverty and disability. It is often said that disability is 'both a cause and consequence of poverty and poverty and disability 'reinforce each other, contributing to increased vulnerability and exclusion'. Poverty increases the likelihood of disability.

Access to services: Their inability to access legal protection and redress because services are not accessible and there is a lack of awareness of the issues that women and girls with disabilities face in regards to their vulnerability.

The introduction of mandatory lockdowns to curb covid 19 saw a rise in Gender-based violence for persons with disabilities with adverse effects on women. Due to lack of information, some persons with disabilities particularly those with hearing impairment found themselves in town during the lockdowns and found themselves stranded or having to answer to security forces with little success. We implore Government and stakeholders to ensure that when information on covid 19 and lockdowns is shared, please ensure that persons with different disabilities including women also have access to that information to avoid what they faced in the past lockdowns. Development agencies, power holders, and service providers need to build into their programmes the right protection for women with disabilities. It will require sustained global focus, momentum, and action.

We applaud the efforts made by the government of Zimbabwe thus far where they have considered recruiting directors of Gender, Inclusivity, and Wellness in all the 21 Ministries. This will go a long way.

As FODPZ, we stand with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community Small and Medium Enterprise Development in saying “Orange the world: End violence against women now!

It does not matter that we do not have a voice to cry out for help, It does not matter that we cannot see to identify GBV perpetrators, It does not matter that we are not strong enough to defend ourselves, BUT DO NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE!

“No to child marriages”.

Covid-19 fuels Gender-Based Violence

By Caroline Muzhingi

The Covid-19 pandemic and the protracted national lockdowns are fueling a surge in Gender-Based Violence cases in the country.

According to an article published by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in November 2021, 1 in 3 women aged 15 to 25 have experienced physical violence and 1 in 4 women have experienced sexual violence from the age of 15.

Merjury Makunere, a women's rights activist said that Covid-19 has caused an increase in GBV cases.

“It was our first time to stay together as families all day long, which meant that there was an increased intake of food in homes. Most of the people could not sell their goods because vending stalls were closed, which made women susceptible to GBV as they asked their husbands to give them money for rent and food,” she said.

Makunere noted that people could not afford to pay rent which resulted in landlords throwing their belongings in the streets. She also said that Covid-19 lockdown restrictions kept women and children trapped inside with their abusers.

The Director of Youth Essence, Nobuhle Mahlahla said that Covid-19 disrupted the streams of income for both women and men which consequently caused tension in homes, especially for married couples.

“Wives would put pressure on their husbands to find other means of generating income which often resulted in verbal and physical abuse,” she added.

Mahlahla noted that the fear of contracting Covid-19 had

psychological effects on people which made them act irrationally towards others.

“The psychological effects of Covid-19 were adverse on people which caused them to act violently towards others,” she explained.

Clifford Chikukutu, the Director of Women of Africa also noted that Covid-19 showed that the world was not ready to respond to the rapid escalation of all forms of violence against women and girls.

In addressing GBV, Chikukutu suggested that there is a need for comprehensive and inclusive approaches that can be adapted to changing contexts, preventing and responding to all forms of violence.

Chikukutu added that the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative has made significant progress in preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls.

“In 2020 alone women and girls were provided with GBV services despite the Covid-19 related constraints and lockdowns. Men and boys were educated on positive masculinity, respectful relationships, and nonviolent conflict resolution and there was an increase in the number of convictions of perpetrators of violence as compared to 2019, showing that it is possible to deliver high-quality results for women and girls even under the constraints of a pandemic,” he explained.

Policies to be put in place to eliminate GBV

Makunere said that there is a need for laws that ensure that perpetrators of GBV are given long-term sentences. Chikukutu also noted that there is a need to scale up evidence-driven prevention programming, offering accessible and quality services for survivors and empowering girl-led and women's rights organizations.

Disclaimer: The writers in this publication were trained by NANGO with support from the European Union to monitor the National Indicative Program.

The contents of articles from independent writers do not necessarily reflect the position and resolve of NANGO, European Union and United Nations Development Programme. This newsletter also promotes stories written by NANGO members and the broader civil society.

NANGO is supported to provide platforms that promote national dialogue on topical and contemporary issues that affect Zimbabwean

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