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FORGING PATHWAYS TO END ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG) IN THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Joint Statement

We, representatives of the Gender Ministries from both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar; Ministries of Justice from both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar; the Judges of the Court of Appeal and High Court of Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar; Khadis from the Khadi's Court- Zanzibar; Office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) for Zanzibar; Law Reform Commission, Tanzania; The Attorney General's Chambers – Zanzibar; Law School of Zanzibar; Parliamentarians of Tanzania Mainland and Members of the House of Representatives of Zanzibar; the United Nations; the European Delegation in Tanzania; Embassy of Norway; Tanzania Women Judges Association (TAWJA); leaders of women's rights organisations (WROs); representatives of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); Network of Traditional Leaders in Tanzania; Religious Leaders; and Members of the Academia, gathered at Madinat Al Bahr Hotel, Zanzibar for a multi-stakeholder dialogue from July 31 – August 2, 2024. We considered the ways to integrate gender equality into lawmaking and strategies to address violence against women and girls. As a result, we:

Affirm our steadfast commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, underscored by our ratification of international and regional gender-sensitive instruments, as well as the enactment of domestic legislation promoting gender equality.

Recognize that the government of the United Republic of Tanzania, including the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, has demonstrated strong political commitment towards achieving gender equality and empowering women. The United Republic of Tanzania has renewed its dedication to these goals by pledging to review, amend, and enact gender-sensitive laws and policies, with a particular emphasis on promoting gender equality.

Recognize that the United Republic of Tanzania is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), taking into special consideration SDG 5 to *achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*, including fulfilment of commitments to review, enact and amend laws to ensure gender sensitivity and the rights of women and girls are upheld.

Reaffirm that the commitments made in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/52/231), as well as those contained in the outcome document of the twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" (A/S-23/10/Rev.1) are implemented, as they provide a legal framework and comprehensive set of measures for the elimination and prevention of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls.



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Understand the commitments made by the United Republic of Tanzania through ratifying, signing, and domesticating the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other regional instruments promoting women's rights, including the 1977 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender Declaration and its 1998 addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of violence against women and children; the 2003 Optional Protocol on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women; the 2004 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA); and the 2008 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

The Government has further reaffirmed that gender equality is a national priority for the prosperity of the United Republic of Tanzania.

We recognize:

1. That violence is a social, economic, and sustainable development issue. We emphasize that violence against women and girls is deeply rooted in historical and structural inequalities in power relations between men and women, and it continues to be a widespread violation of human rights in the United Republic of Tanzania.
2. That violence against women and girls is among the most insidious and devastating expressions of gender inequality. This violence can lead to immediate and long-term physical, psychological, economic, and health consequences, including the potential loss of life.
3. That violence against women is a form of discrimination that severely violates, impairs, or nullifies the ability of women and girls to fully enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms.
4. The presence of gender-discriminatory laws in the United Republic of Tanzania hinders the achievement of gender equality. Women, girls, people with disabilities (PWDs), and youth are disproportionately affected by these laws, which deny them their basic human rights and limit their access to justice.
5. That the United Republic of Tanzania has made some progress towards the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in pursuance of gender equality. It is noted that the steps towards gender equality in Tanzania have been compromised by the existence of gender discriminatory laws, harmful traditional practices and the prevalence of gender-based violence. The global and national picture in terms of gender equality has been uneven, and women and girls are enduring inequalities that are reflected in current patterns of gender-based violence within the United Republic of Tanzania.
6. That implementation of the recommendations from the study on the 'Analysis of the Laws of Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar from a gender perspective' will contribute to a gender-sensitive legal and policy framework.
7. That as key stakeholders in promoting gender equality and addressing violence against women in the United Republic of Tanzania, we pledge our commitment to advancing gender equality. This commitment will be realized through the implementation of the newly adopted National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children (NPA - VAWC) for both Mainland and Zanzibar, as well as the review, enactment, amendment, and enforcement of gender-sensitive laws.
8. That addressing these complex realities in an inclusive, comprehensive, and sustainable manner requires strategic and coordinated action by actors in all spheres and sectors of society and requires genuine and durable partnership with government, private sector, development partners, civil society, academia and the media.



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Call to Action

As stakeholders in defining and shaping Tanzania's development agenda, we commit to:

Legal and Policy Framework

- **Strengthen the evidence base:** Conduct continuous, evidence-based research and data collection, especially on violence against women and girls, as well as gender analysis, dissemination, and use to address data gaps and guide the development of programs and interventions that are appropriately tailored to meet the needs of communities in Tanzania.
- **Advocate for comprehensive legal reform:** Proactively campaign for the repeal of all discriminatory laws against women and the enactment of legislation that promotes equality, justice, and women's empowerment.
- **Integrate a gender perspective into budgeting:** Implement gender-responsive budgeting across all sectors and levels of government to allocate resources equitably and effectively address gender inequalities.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

- **Zero tolerance for VAWG:** Promote a societal culture of zero tolerance for VAWG through comprehensive prevention, protection, and response strategies and actions.
- **Align local governance with national standards:** Ensure that community by-laws are fully aligned with national laws and policies on gender equality and women's rights.
- **Empower women in decision-making:** Facilitate the active participation of women, including women with disabilities, in legal and policy reform processes to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are addressed.

Implementation and Support

- **Operationalize research findings:** Develop and implement concrete action plans based on the recommendations of the study, "Analysis of the Laws of Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar from a gender perspective," to address identified legal gaps and challenges.
- **Provide comprehensive support services:** Expand access to essential services for survivors of Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC), including psychosocial support, safe spaces, referral systems, and social mobilization and awareness-raising campaigns.
- **Enhance legal aid for marginalized women:** Strengthen legal aid services, particularly for marginalized women, to ensure equal access to justice and protection of their rights.
- **Strengthen law enforcement:** Support the government in effectively enforcing laws related to gender-based violence and holding perpetrators accountable.
- **Protect women human rights defenders:** Implement measures to protect and support women human rights defenders who are at the forefront of advocating for women's rights and gender equality.

We call on our government to: Fulfill and abide by international and regional commitments and instruments; Review and amend discriminatory laws against women and girls; and enforce gender-sensitive laws; Undertake gender-responsive budgeting; Adopt promising practices on EAW; Implement legal and policy responses towards gender equality and women economic empowerment; and sustain multi-stakeholder partnerships to realize the rights of all women and girls in the United Republic of Tanzania.



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We call on development partners to: continue adequate allocation of resources to the United Republic of Tanzania through technical and financial support; and ensure the effective implementation of commitments and actions related to justice and ending violence against women and girls.