Communiqué on Comprehensive Sexuality Education by Members of Parliament from the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) HIV/AIDS and Governance Project National Working Group, Zambia Women Parliamentary Caucus, Parliamentary Caucus on Children, members from the Portfolio Committees on Youth, Sport and Child Affairs; Local Governance, Housing and Chiefs’ Affairs; Education, Science and Technology; and Legal Affairs, Human Rights, National Guidance, Gender Matters and Governance.

12th October, 2020
Whereas we acknowledge the efforts being put in place and implemented by the Government with regard to Comprehensive Sexuality Education, We the Members of Parliament participating in the multi-stakeholder consultative meeting on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) have taken time today to interrogate and deliberate on CSE with the goal of understanding its development and implementation in Zambia.

We are cognizant that in 2013, the Government of Zambia through the Ministry of General Education developed the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) framework to enrich the provision of Reproductive Health and Sexuality Education. CSE features as a cross cutting theme in the Zambia Education Curriculum Framework. CSE is not taken as a standalone subject, but its content is integrated in; Integrated Science (at Primary and Junior Secondary), Biology (at Senior Secondary); Social Studies (at Primary and Junior Secondary) and Civic Education (at Senior Secondary); Home Economics and Religious Education.

We acknowledge that the development of the CSE Framework was prompted by data from research indicating high alarming numbers of school dropout due to pregnancy, high infection rate of STIs including HIV prevalence among the 15 to 24 age groups.¹

We note that the content of the CSE framework was subjected to wide stakeholder consultation including; religious leaders,

Members of Parliament, traditional Leaders, CSOs, curriculum development experts and the public at large. The consultative process was meant to ensure that CSE was not only age appropriate, but was adapted to the cultural, traditional and religious beliefs and in line with the legal framework of Zambia.

**We Support** the provision of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) for all that benefit women and adolescents, and safeguard the health of their children and societies at large and recognize that CSE is an integral part of SRHR.

**We are committed to the following:**

**To leave no one behind.** We as the people’s representatives are cognizant that Sexual Reproductive Health of Adolescents is of critical importance in attaining SDG Numbers 3 on good health and wellbeing, Number 4 on quality Education and Number 5 on Gender, by the year 2030. In this regard we, shall, through our constitutional mandate support the proposed consultative process by the Government on CSE and ensure that the children are protected from vices that negate the enjoyment of the right to health and education.

**To ensure that every Zambian child and young person** has unhindered access to the right to Education including age appropriate CSE, which seeks to promote human dignity and respect especially of the girl child and commit to continue being advocates of good quality education for all and to call upon the Executive to avail resources for the sexual reproductive health of
children and young people so that they can freely attain their right to Education.

**To engage in appropriate consultation and review** of relevant policies in the Education Sector including the CSE policy with a view to demystifying the misconceptions surrounding the implementation and teaching of CSE in Zambia.

**To urge the Executive through the Ministry of General Education** to take the lead in explaining CSE as custodian of the policy especially in view of deep divergent views among members of the public.

**To urge the Executive through the Ministry of General Education** to carry out wide public sensitization on CSE, especially in rural areas where the bulk of the girl child are disadvantaged with regard to accessing good quality education and sexual reproductive health services.

**To accelerate continued advocacy for CSE** and the empowerment of men, women and adolescent girls and boys (with the involvement of traditional leadership, religious and civic leaders) – so that they can make informed decisions about their own lives and get empowered to be agents of change and contributors to Zambia’s collective and transformative aspirations;

**To promote transparency and accountability** in the implementation of CSE programmes through the representative and oversight functions of national Parliaments and relevant parliamentary committees, and to ensure the adoption of public budgets in Parliament that are sensitive to Sexual Reproductive Health in general and CSE in particular.
To urgently call upon all concerned parties irrespective of divergent views, to come to a round table meeting and openly discuss CSE as it is being implemented in Zambia with a view to appreciating its content and implementation.

In Conclusion, allow us to reaffirm our support to the teaching of CSE in the Zambia Education system and to the announcement by the Executive to carry out broad based consultations on CSE, taking into consideration a multi-stakeholder approach in the consultative process.

We Thank You.