



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT
DELIVERED BY THE MINISTER OF GENDER ON THE
"HeForShe" CAMPAIGN, BOYS TO MEN WOMEN AT
WORK IN PROGRAMMES IN ZAMBIA**

Prepared by: Ministry of Gender, Lusaka

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Mr. Speaker,

Let me take this opportunity to thank you for according me this rare privilege to deliver a Ministerial Statement to this August House, on the new activities which my Ministry has undertaken in the recent past, and will be undertaking soon, in order to uphold and safeguard the rights of women, young girls and the most vulnerable in society.

The Ministry of Gender with the support of the UN Family in particular (UN Women) with selected Civil Society Organisations and the traditional leadership as the implementing partners, launched the "HeForShe" Campaign as part of the global solidarity movement. The Ministry of Gender was privileged to have the "HeForShe" campaign under the theme: **'harnessing leadership for gender equality in Zambia'** was launched by His Excellency, Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia on 18th July, 2015 in Nyamphande Chiefdom of Petauke district.

This event was witnessed by among other dignitaries the the UN Administrator, from New York, UN family here in Zambia, the Minister of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, Members of Parliament members of the House of Chiefs and other traditional leaders from across Zambia. The President launched the campaign in his capacity as a champion for gender equality in Zambia.

Mr. Speaker,

The campaign aims at engaging boys and girls, men and women as agents of change for the attainment of gender equality and women's rights, by addressing those behaviours and stereotypes that favour men and make women look and be inferior in society.

Mr Speaker

This initiative aims at harnessing high level male leaders that will take a stance and raise their voices on gender equality. It is expected that the campaign will result in increased recognition and appreciation of the centrality of gender equality in development as a means of achieving sustainable development; individual and institutional

transformation of values, belief for advancing gender equality, especially among men and boys. These men are expected to sign up.

The campaign will go beyond the mere signing up of men, it will change individual values, beliefs and behaviors towards gender equality, which will in turn transform institutions and communities.

Mr. Speaker,

Alongside the "HeForShe" campaign, my Ministry will be implementing another programme known as 'Boys to men' soon with the financial support to the tune of **US1,491,324** from USAID will be launching the "Boys to Men" project in November the first week of October 2015. This project aims to provide an opportunity for boys to develop into non-violent, healthy men, supported by adult male mentors.

The Boys to Men project will reduce social acceptance and occurrence of GBV in Zambia by inculcating positive, non-violent male development. Linking the traditional moral

authority of chiefs and other traditional leaders and the experience from the Men's Network, the project will target boys and young men aged 15 - 21 in both rural and urban environments. This age group has been chosen because it is transitioning from youth to adulthood, shifting from observers of GBV to potential perpetrators.

The project will develop processes that engage boys and young men in addressing social norms that perpetuate GBV. It will work across sectors, including law enforcement, education, health, local government, civil society, and traditional leaders to ensure local ownership of the work and ideas for strengthening the engagement of boys and young men and will be will all be involved in the project implementation cycle.

Mr. Speaker,

In Zambia, engaging men through Men's Network and traditional leaders in the fight against GBV has assisted in abolishing, cultural practices such as sexual cleansing and child marriages in some communities. Such men have been role models for other men in promoting non-violent

relationships, as well as respect for women. As agents of change, men have participated in sessions where they share testimonies of how their lives have been transformed into caring, respectful and non-violent husbands, responsible, supportive, and non-violent fathers. This has assisted in reducing violence and destitution in families and developed a pool of leaders of change in their communities.

The strategic approach of the Boys to Men program therefore will build on these past and current role-modeling and mentorship programs for boys, furthering program successes and using lessons learned to implement innovative approaches.

The main objectives of the Boys to Men program include:

1. Build on the engagement of boys and young men in the fight against GBV in schools and communities in urban and rural areas.
2. Strengthen the engagement of traditional leaders as champions in GBV prevention and response in rural communities.

3. Through awareness raising shift attitudes, knowledge, and practices among boys and young men in targeted communities on GBV.

Mr. Speaker,

In Zambia, women hold a small minority of leadership positions. While many have the desire to rise to leadership positions within their local communities, work places, and nationally, they do not have the skills and opportunities to move into these positions in any significant numbers. It is against this background that my Ministry with the support of USAID will be implementing another robust project to be launched at the same time with the "Boys to Men" project called **"Women at Work"**.

The "Women at Work" project seeks to promote gender equality, female empowerment and leadership. The "Women at Work" project has three main objectives as follows:

- To increase the leadership capacity and opportunities amongst young Zambian women, aged 25-35, in the spheres of public management, civic leadership, and

business and entrepreneurship. Emphasis and priority will be given to women from outside the capital city and underprivileged backgrounds.

- To use the learning from this programme to influence women's enhanced participation in positions of decision making and much more gender-sensitive policies and programs.
- In the longer term, measure the impact of the gender-sensitive policies and programs on girls, boys, women and men.

These objectives are tightly linked to relevant strategies and country priorities. The Patriotic Front government under the able leadership of His Excellency, Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, and President of the Republic of Zambia declared the highest priorities for Zambia as agriculture, health, education, housing and infrastructure. Women at Work will address the first three of these priorities.

Through the internships, young women will expand their leadership skills, learn firsthand the workplace environment and expectations of employers, understand

their rights in the work place, develop their managerial skills, and, in best case scenarios, be offered permanent employment at the end of the internship program.

The skills that these young women will acquire will strengthen will enable them to take on greater leadership roles within their communities and places of employment. Their increased leadership skills and knowledge help them to navigate complex relationships in the modern work environment will serve them well as they rise through the ranks.

Mr. Speaker

Women at Work holds great promise for learning that can be applied elsewhere. Unemployment and the lack of women in leadership positions in public, private and civil society sectors have hampered Zambia's overall development. Women at Work can provide a model that is very scalable to directly engage young women leaders in internship and mentoring programs to further their skills, provide them leadership opportunities and develop a support base from which they can grow and bring others up with them. Companies and organizations hosting

interns or providing mentors will have access to a unique pool of young women leaders who can directly contribute to the success of their organizations. Local Councils and political parties will have a pool of qualified young women leaders who can be called upon to take on Councilor roles through electoral processes.

Communities will have strong women leaders to advocate on their behalf on issues of importance to the local community.

Mr. Speaker,

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the fact that gender equality cannot be achieved without the involvement of men and boys, because it is not a concern of women and girls only. Working with men and boys, transforming masculinity and traditional perceptions of manhood must be part of the gender equality agenda. It is time for men to join forces and enhance their role in helping to ensure a more egalitarian society; this is a win for women, a win for men and a win for our common humanity. With a growing gender equality movement, it's possible that the next generation of young men will grow up in a society

where mutual respect, support and a shared sense of responsibility between parties is the norm.

I thank you Mr. Speaker and beg to move.