

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
FOREWORD	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	5
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	6
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....	7
THE PROBLEM.....	7
OUR COMMITMENT.....	8
OUR ACTION	10

A young girl with short dark hair, smiling, wearing a teal school uniform with a white collar and a dark blue backpack. She is holding a pink book with the letters 'CU' visible on the cover. The background shows a building with a yellow lattice wall and a doorway.

Vision

*A Zimbabwe free
from child marriages
where both boys and
girls enjoy equal
status*



FOREWORD



Amai Auxillia Mnangagwa

The occurrence of child marriages is a challenge which the Government of Zimbabwe is prepared to eradicate through investing in a multi-sectoral approach. Therefore, it gives me great pleasure to present to you the **National Action Plan and Communication Strategy on Ending Child Marriage (2019-2021)**. It is a commitment by government, civil society organisations and development partners to work together to end this scourge. The Plan is anchored by our Constitutional provisions for gender equality and protection of children's rights. It also contributes to operationalising the global commitments to which Zimbabwe is a party. These include Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children in Africa and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

The National Action Plan coordinated by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development was developed in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders cited below. This Plan of Action is therefore a product which benefited from technical inputs from all the organisations which participated in the process. I heartily commend this spirit of working together to achieve our national goals.

The Government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development envisages to continue assuming its obligations and commitments to end child marriage. In order to achieve this, a National Action Plan to End Child Marriage has been developed. It is in line with constitutional provisions and the Constitutional Court ruling of 2016 which outlawed child marriages and placed the legal age of marriage at 18 for both boys and girls in Zimbabwe. The Constitution supersedes all legislative and customary principles prevailing in the country. Considering the current process of realignment of laws to the Constitution, it means that the Marriage Act and the Customary Marriages Act will be amended to align the laws to the provisions of the Constitution which sets the age of marriage at 18.

The implementation of this National Action Plan will be through a coordinated multi-sectoral approach in which the Government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development and other line Ministries in partnership with civil society organizations, religious and traditional leaders as well as the private sector will play complementary roles in ensuring the implementation of the National Action Plan.

Let me express my sincere gratitude to UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA and ROOTS who provided financial and technical support as well as other organizations for their unwavering support to the development of this National Action Plan. The National Action Plan will go a long way in strengthening the capacity of Government of Zimbabwe to effectively address the problem of child marriage.

Mnangagwa

Amai Auxillia Mnangagwa
First Lady of the Republic of Zimbabwe

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Honourable Dr Sithembiso G.G. Nyoni (MP)

The preparation of the National Action Plan on Ending Child Marriage has benefited from valued inputs from diverse stakeholders. We are grateful to the First Lady of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Her Excellency Auxillia Mnangangwa, for her commitment, support, guidance and unshakeable stand against Child Marriage. We are also grateful to Mr B. Parajuli and the United Nations family who are participating in the Spotlight Initiative, for their commitment towards the prevention of Gender Based Violence and Child Marriages. Our gratitude goes to UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and UN Women who provided financial and technical support. We are pleased to count among those that have already committed to partner us in this endeavour, the following:

- Ministry of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage
- Ministry of Justice Legal And Parliamentary Affairs
- Ministry of Public Service, Labour And Social Welfare
- Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
- Ministry of Health and Child Care
- Ministry of Youth, Sport, Arts and Recreation
- Zimbabwe Gender Commission
- Anti-Domestic Violence Council
- National Youth Council
- Women's Coalition
- Child Rights and Welfare Coalition
- ROOTS
- Katswe Sisterhood
- Plan International
- Childline
- Tag a life
- Shamwari yemwanasikana
- Justice for Children Trust
- The Girls Legacy
- Women's Action Group

Without the valued inputs of these Ministries, agencies and organisations, the production of the National Action Plan on Ending Child Marriage would not have been possible.

We are particularly grateful to ROOTS for availing their technical expertise to assist the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development to engage stakeholders and compile the action plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S G Nyoni".

Honourable Dr Sithembiso G.G. Nyoni (MP)
Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADVC	Anti-Domestic Violence Council
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module
C4D	Communication for Development
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CM	Child Marriage
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DCWPS	Department of Child Welfare and Protection Services
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
GC	Girl Child
IEC	Information Education and Communication
JSC	Judicial Service Commission
MOHCC	Ministry of Health and Child Care
MSC	Most Significant Change
MWACSMED	Ministry of Women Affairs Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development
NAP	National Action Plan
PPC	Parliamentary Portfolio Committee
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TOR	Terms of Reference

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Development of the National Action Plan and Communication Strategy on Ending Child Marriage

The Zimbabwe National Action Plan and Communication Strategy on Ending Child Marriage [NAP] was developed in response to the African Union Campaign on Ending Child Marriage. This NAP also responds to the call in the AFRICAN COMMON POSITION ON THE AU CAMPAIGN TO END CHILD MARRIAGE IN AFRICA. This call requires member states to “Develop, elaborate, and implement national strategies and action plans, including putting in place mechanisms and institutions for the enforcement, monitoring and reporting, along with financial and human resources, all aimed at ending child marriage”¹.

The NAP takes cognisance of the Sustainable Development Goals particularly target 5.3 which is on elimination of all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations. It is designed to put into action, national child protection laws and policies that respond to child marriage to prevent girls at risk of getting into child marriage and protect those in child marriage.

This NAP is the result of a wide consultative process with various stakeholders who included Academia, CSOs, Traditional Leaders, Policy Makers, and Religious leaders, Young People, Child Brides, Embassies, Families and Communities. In addition, over 30 documents pertaining child marriage at the global, regional and national levels² were reviewed. Stakeholder consultations were held in the 10 provinces of Zimbabwe.

DEFINITION OF CHILD MARRIAGE

Under international law, child marriage is defined as any legal or customary union involving a girl or boy below the age of 18. The general definition of child marriage in the Zimbabwean context is a formal marriage or an informal union in which at least one of the parties is a child, i.e. a person under the age of 18. This definition draws from various conventions, treaties, and international agreements, including the

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Universal Declaration of Human Rights and recent resolutions of the UN Human Rights Council on 2nd of July 2015³. The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the

Child, defines marriage under age 18 as child marriage (UN 2000)⁴.

THE PROBLEM

Child marriage is a global problem. Approximately 15 million girls are married before they reach the age of 18. That is, around 41 000 girls every day. In the developing world, 1 in 3 girls is married by age 18; and 1 in 9 is married by age 15, some as young as eight or nine⁵. A study carried out by UNICEF⁶, 34% of women in Zimbabwe aged between 20 – 24 years old were married or in a union before they were eighteen

1 <http://pages.au.int/cecm/documents/african-common-position-au-campaign-end-child-marriage-africa> (accessed on 08/07/16)

2 Desk Review on Preparation of the National Action Plan. UNICEF

3 <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/human-rights-council-adopts-resolution-to-end-child-early-and-forced-marriage/>

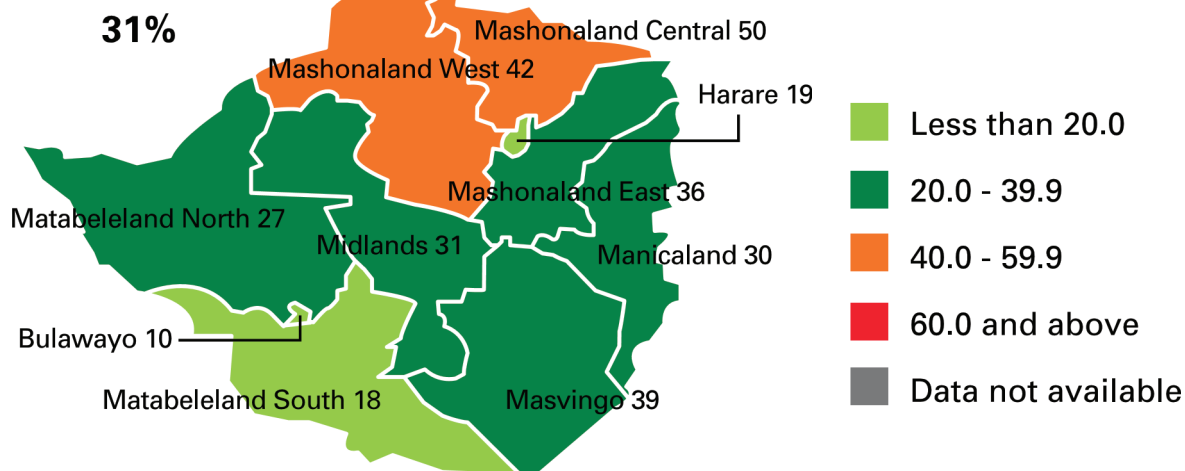
4 International Centre for Research for Women (ICRW); Solutions to end Child Marriage; what the evidence shows-2011

5 UNICEF, *Ending Child Marriage: Progress and prospects*, 2014

6 (UNICEF) State of the World's Children, 2014

years old. According to the 2012 census, 56 799 children aged 15-17 years⁷ were married, with a greater proportion for girls (12 percent) having been married than boys (0.9 percent). A very high proportion (92.7 percent) of the married children were girls, it is also worrying that 4 159 children aged 15-17 years had divorced/separated, whilst 456 were widowed. Rural areas had a higher proportion (7.6 percent of married children, than urban areas (3.7 percent). The proportions of married children increased with age, with 17 year olds accounting for the majority of married children. The map below shows hot spot areas in terms of child marriage.

National average



Child marriage has many negative consequences for girls, which include the following:

- stunted physical intellectual and social development
- vulnerability to a host of sexual and reproductive health challenges, particularly birth complications and obstetric fistula.
- puts girls at greater risk of gender based violence.
- disadvantages girls as they have less access to opportunities for economic empowerment.
- Girls who marry young are least likely to pursue tertiary/vocational education thus reducing their chances of pursuing professions/jobs that give them economic independence. This results in increased poverty among girls who marry young who then have to depend on their spouses, making them vulnerable to gender based discrimination and violence⁸.

OUR COMMITMENT

Zimbabwe is party to several international human rights instruments which explicitly and implicitly obligate her to put in place measures to end child marriages. These include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children in Africa, The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development⁹ and the SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage¹⁰. While the Constitution of Zimbabwe, reserves the ability to consent to marriage to people

⁷ The 2012 Population Census only asked for marital status of those aged 15 years and above.

⁸ <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/what-is-the-impact/>

⁹ http://www.sadc.int/documents-publications/show/Protocol_on_Gender_and_Development_2008.pdf (accessed on 7 July 2016)

¹⁰ <https://www.sadc.int/news-events/news/model-law-access-information-africa-introduced-sadc/> (accessed on 7 July 2018)

who are above the age of 18, currently the law permits girls to be married before they reach the age of 18. The Customary Marriages Act, the Marriage Act allow girls to be married before the age of 18, by making provision for parental consent for the marriage of persons under the age of 18. In addition, the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act sets the age for consent to sex at 16. This raises controversy related to the fact that young girls of 16 are deemed able to consent to engage in sexual activity but they are considered unable to consent to marriage. On the other hand, the Children's Act seems to glorify child marriage by providing that a man who marries a girl under age becomes her guardian. Thus, while the Constitution provides for marriage as a union between two persons over the age of 18, and whilst in 2016, the Constitutional Court made a ruling that outlawed marriage of persons below the age of 18, in reality, the legislative and policy frameworks still provide for and protect the right to enter into marriage for persons under the age of 18. It is these discrepancies between the provisions of the Constitution and other laws that this NAP, among other interventions, will address.

This action plan sets out the mapping, theory of change and communication for development of strategies that the Government of Zimbabwe intends to implement through a multi-stakeholder partnership in order to address child marriage in Zimbabwe.



OUR ACTION

Vision: A Zimbabwe free from child marriages where both boys and girls enjoy equal status

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	OBJECTIVE :	STRATEGIES	IDENTIFIED ACTIVITIES	TIME LINE	KEY PARTNERS	INDICATORS
A coordinated Response to child marriage in Zimbabwe	Enhance planning, coordination and monitoring of the implementation of NAP and Communication strategy on Ending Child Marriage	Formation of structures that will effectively coordinate, monitor and evaluate the NAP	Establishment of the Inter-ministerial committee on Ending Child Marriage	January – February 2019	National level: Lead agent: DCWPS plus Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, National Victim Friendly System Ministry of Health and Child	Number of organisations/ individuals joining the Multi-Stakeholder partnership on ending Child Marriage Key procedural tasks and plans to be followed by responsible partners set.
			Partner Mapping	February 2019	Care Ministry of Youth Sport, Arts and Recreation, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education	Partner Map developed
			Development of National Strategic Plan		Ministry of Finance UN Agencies NGOs Academia	Establishment of NAP Coordination office
			Establishment of Multi-Stakeholder coalition on ending child marriage in Zimbabwe at community, district, provincial and national levels	March 2019	Research Institutions Parliamentarians Gender Commission Media Anti-Domestic Violence Council Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission	Inter-ministerial Committee established and meeting regularly
			Development of Provincial, District Actions Plans drawn from the NAP Provincial and District Level Launches of NAP Setting up Community Stakeholder Working Groups on ending child marriages	Between March to December 2019.	Traditional and Religious Leaders	TOR for the Inter-ministerial National Strategy in place Costed Implementation Plan developed
		Strengthen human resources capacity to implement NAP	Establish and maintain a national coordination office for NAP on Child Marriage	By August 2019		
	Improve monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of programs to end child marriage in Zimbabwe	Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for NAP	Develop Monitoring and Evaluation Tools for NAP Conduct Quarterly Monitoring and Evaluation review meetings for NAP	By August – October 2019	ADVC NGOs CBOs DSW	% of programmes to end child marriages evaluated at mid-term and termination stages % reduction in child marriage prevalence rates % reduction in school dropouts No. of Parliamentarians and traditional & religious leaders trained Harmonisation of laws

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	OBJECTIVE :	STRATEGIES	IDENTIFIED ACTIVITIES	TIME LINE	KEY PARTNERS	INDICATORS
Evidence Based Programming on Child Marriage	Collect and Collate statistics on girls married below the age of 18	Research on the impact of teenage pregnancy on CM Research on Social Norms Impact on CM research	Gather new and existing evidence on: - child initiated marriages - pregnancy initiated marriages - pledging in marriage - religion sanctioned marriages of girls - economic transactional sanctioned marriages - marriages sanctioned in wake of abuse Document interventions on SRHR and other youth led interventions that delay sexual debut	Ongoing	UN Agencies NGOs ZIMSTATS MWACSMED Media	Availability of data on child marriage trends, prevalence and magnitude Documented youth centred interventions that delay sexual debut Documentary on MSC stories Number of print articles, radio/TV mentions of new and existing evidence
Increased school retention and secondary education completion by girls	Improved equal access to quality education, particularly Secondary education.	Most Significant Change Stories documentation Retention of girls in school	Monitor access to BEAM Monitor implementation of Second Chance Education by girls Track access to STEM Initiatives Second chance education for girls and reintegration	2 years	UN agencies Development Partners Private Sector Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education School Development Associations Teachers Associations Social clubs GVT Community development structures	Increased number of girls re-entering education system Increase in the number of orphaned and vulnerable girls being enrolled on BEAM % increase of girls on STEM % increase in the number of girls completing basic secondary education [o levels]
Reduced gender discrimination against girls	Increased mobilization of girls, boys, parents, media, religious and community leaders to change gender discriminatory practices and social norms.	Social mobilization Develop partnerships with traditional, CBOs and religious leaders Strengthen community based child Protection mechanisms	Development of social mobilisation toolkit Development of guidelines to end CM Training of partner organisations on the use of the toolkit Male symposiums Set up a national network of traditional and religious leaders engaged for changing discriminatory gender norms and ending child marriages Facilitate dialogues in communities by the Coalition Training and sensitisation of CCWs/WardCos/Village Health Workers and Youth Officers Strengthen existing networks of community based structures that monitor child marriage	2019-2020 February 2019 January 2019	Parents Media houses Ministry of Social welfare FBOs Traditional leaders CBOs MWACSMED district and ward structures Male led groups	Tool kit on Social Mobilisation on ending child marriage developed Number of partner organisation trained and utilising the toolkit Number of community child protection mechanisms developed. Increase child marriage free zones at community level Number of males reached and involved Number of outreaches and meetings held by the coalition Child marriage free zones created Number of print articles and radio/TV mentions of current gender norms and the need to change attitudes

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	OBJECTIVE :	STRATEGIES	IDENTIFIED ACTIVITIES	TIME LINE	KEY PARTNERS	INDICATORS
Reduced incidences of child marriage	Reduce incidence CM by addressing its root causes and creating alternative social economic and civic opportunities for girls	<p>Create partnerships between Government Departments, NGOs and the private sector working towards poverty alleviation</p> <p>Create Alternative social, economic and civic opportunities for girls</p>	<p>Grand Coalition on Ending Child Marriage engage and sensitise key stakeholders on CM using researches</p> <p>Sharing Research with identified stakeholders</p> <p>Revival of Youth social Centres</p> <p>Facilitate support groups [e.g sister2sister clubs and gender clubs]</p>	September 2019	<p>Ministry of Home Affairs Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Ministry of Health and Child Care, Ministry of Youth Sport, Arts and Recreation, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development DCWPS NGOs ZIMSTATS</p>	<p>Number of partnership formalised with partners on poverty alleviation</p> <p>Increase in gender sensitive policy formulation</p> <p>Gender integration in stakeholder interventions targeting girls</p> <p>Number of girl led youth empowerment circles</p> <p>Number of girls accessing opportunities through such mechanisms / partnerships</p> <p>% increased Budgetary allocation to interventions on ending child marriages.</p> <p>Increase in social and safe spaces available for girls and young women</p>

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	OBJECTIVE :	STRATEGIES	IDENTIFIED ACTIVITIES	TIME LINE	KEY PARTNERS	INDICATORS
Improved support to girls in marriage and girls at risk of CM	Enhance advocacy to mobilize action and support for girls who are already married or at risk of CM	<p>Engagement of girls to ascertain needs</p> <p>Second Chance Education</p> <p>Advocate at governmental, nongovernmental and private sector level for enhanced support of girls who are already married or at risk of girls at risk</p> <p>legal and social advocacy</p>	<p>Standard Minimum Package for girls in and at risk of marriage developed</p> <p>Youth Friendly SRH Service provision</p>	<p>2 years</p>	<p>NGOs</p> <p>MWACSMED</p> <p>Gender Commission</p> <p>ADVOC</p> <p>MHCC</p> <p>JSC</p> <p>CBOs</p> <p>Private Sector</p>	<p>Standard Minimum package developed</p> <p>Number of married girls and women exposed to information on SRHR</p> <p>% of married girls or women who married as girls accessing education</p> <p>Number of married girls or women who married as girls accessing comprehensive SRHR / HIV/ GBV services.</p> <p>Number of married girls or women who married as girls accessing legal services to end their marriages successfully</p> <p>% increase in the registration of births of female babies</p> <p>Improved evidence-informed analysis of key population needs and response</p> <p>Increased in legal rights knowledge among girls in marriage</p>
		<p>legal and social advocacy</p>	<p>Trainings on the law for children in marriage and their communities</p> <p>Sensitisation on legal and policy frameworks that protect girls in marriage eg the Domestic Violence Act and Maintenance Act</p> <p>Provision of legal aid through Mobile Legal Aid Clinics</p> <p>Child Protection Consciousness for Community Service Providers</p>	<p>2 years</p> <p>6 months from January 2019</p>		

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY ON ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

Behaviour Change Communication and Social Mobilization

The objective of developing communication and messaging on ending child marriages is critical for transforming community norms underpinning child marriage. Behaviour change communication (BCC) and Social Community mobilization are an effective set of techniques for promoting social change.¹ The need to transform social norms driving child marriages is critical as an intervention model on ending child marriages.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:	Objectives	STRATEGIES	Identified Activities	TIME LINE	KEY PARTNERS	INDICATORS
Standardised messaging and communication on ending child marriage	Enhance Communication for Development (C4D) coordination and planning of the of NAP and Communication strategy on Ending Child Marriage	Set up structures (technical working Groups) based on thematic areas	Training of CSOs and all structures on C4D on child marriage Establishment of Technical Communication Working Groups on various C4D components on ending child marriages per district Development of campaign Website Recruit and maintain a national coordinating office on C4D for NAP on Child Marriage	June 2019	Communication focused NGOs Media Houses for both print and Broadcast media	Number of C4D trainings on ending child marriages conducted Number of technical communication working groups established per district Number of community based, and national campaigns running on ending child marriages % increase in knowledge on ending child marriage Number of print articles and radio/TV mentions strategy to end child marriage

1 ICWR, New Insights on Preventing Child Marriage: A Global Analysis of Factors and Programs

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:	Objectives	STRATEGIES	Identified Activities	TIME LINE	KEY PARTNERS	INDICATORS
	Facilitate change in attitudes, behaviour, norms around child marriage	Identify C4D thematic areas and Strengthen partners to effectively communicate on NAP and child marriage Develop a Behaviour Change and Communications strategy Advocate for support of child and youth participation and child led initiatives	mass media and interpersonal awareness raising campaigns in each province/district and consequences of early marriage Interpersonal Communication Activities with communities Hold media briefings to keep media informed IEC Materials Development. Identifying local national/ community /child champions to be part of the ambassadors to end child marriage	2 years	A/A	Number of community outreaches conducted Number and quality of IEC Materials Produced Number of Local Champions Identified and participating in the campaign to end child marriage Brand/Campaign Ambassadors % reduction in child marriages in targeted areas Number of media Briefs Held Number child led initiatives
	Increase mobilization of diverse media platforms to change discriminatory gender norms	Develop partnerships with media coalitions/networks and support media to raise awareness and advocate for Girls rights/publicize delaying marriage for girls	Engage and train media personnel to Join the coalition against Child Marriage Strengthen capacities of the media to cover the issues of child marriage and gender / social norms Organize and facilitate press conferences and other media activities related to delaying marriage for girls Media monitoring on child marriage issues - TV, radio, print media	2 years	Media Houses for both print and Broadcast media Freelance Journalists Online Media Groups NGOs Private Sector	Number of press releases, TV and radio programmes supporting change in discriminatory gender norms Number of partnerships formalised with media houses Number of media campaigns on child marriages Number of person exposures to messages against child marriages % increase in reported cases of child marriages Number of community radio stations and newspapers providing coverage on child marriage issues