

Summary Report from 25 November 2021 Virtual High-Level Dialogue: Accelerating Progress and Accountability for Ending Gender-Based Violence in East and Southern Africa



Link to Report recording: https://unwomen.zoom.us/rec/share/DRWGrcbN-1A4ACEu8QKNiAVIYq4PP2SvU5Q_oa9vEiXtbjHplF-hpmCOFVK6CH9s.V6uFH1uVh9AjoxeS
Passcode: 9HPq0B+#

This year's commemoration of the annual 16 Days of Activism on Gender-Based Violence, from 25 November to 10 December was the 30th year since the Campaign was launched in 1991 by the Center for Global Women's Leadership. Through that time, the global landscape on gender-based violence (GBV) has shifted significantly. We now have greater visibility on the issue across regions and contexts and how it affects women and girls as the group most affected by GBV in their diverse identities throughout the course of their lives. There are more commitments at international, regional and national levels to ending various forms of ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG), with clear targets and timelines, and greater availability of data and evidence on the scope and contexts in which violence occurs and the interventions that work to prevent and best respond to it. Each year, there are also more advocates and partners mobilized in support of gender equality, including through dedicated programmatic and policy investments and initiatives. In 2021, this included the GBV Action Coalition launched at the Generation Equality Forums toward accelerating progress in support of women and girls' right to live free of violence.

Despite these positive developments, data on prevalence of violence against women, particularly intimate partner violence, alongside the documented intensification of various forms of violence against women and girls in both development and humanitarian contexts shows that we are not making progress at the same pace as the commitments are being made. There is also shrinking space for gender equality advocates and resistance at various levels to keep patriarchal and inequitable power structures in place.

Across East and Southern Africa, there are diverse actors contributing to moving the needle for EVAWG, including the GBV Action Coalition leaders - the Government of Kenya, the Youth Trust Zimbabwe, the European Union, and commitments from the Council of Traditional Leaders in Africa (COTLA), the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, among other organizations and advocates. Building on this momentum, UN convened a **High-Level Dialogue: Accelerating Progress and Accountability for ending GBV in East and Southern Africa** in commemoration of the 16 Days Campaign, engaging a critical mass of actors working toward a collective vision of an Africa where all women and girls can enjoy their right to live free of violence, in line with the [2021 UNiTE Global Theme of End VAW Now!](#).

The Dialogue aimed to provide an interactive platform for EAW advocates from the region, including GBV Action Coalition Leaders and Commitment Makers to discuss EAW efforts and approaches for improved accountability to women and girls and build relationships for future regional collaboration on closing implementation gaps and transforming social norms that perpetuate gender-based violence.

This summary provides highlights from the Dialogue and actions identified that can be taken forward in 2022. Key messages that were repeated through the discussion were the need for:

1. strengthening collaboration, partnerships and movements for addressing GBV,
2. retaining a focus on survivor-centred approaches, and accountability to women and girls
3. increasing financial investments on the issue in a sustained way that disrupts current power imbalances and ensures essential support to survivors of violence
4. deepening attention to prevention and transforming harmful social norms and patriarchal masculinities
5. keeping hope alive, caring for ourselves and the collective to move our efforts forward

Opening Performance by **Tanzanian Poet Hellen Bulugu, 'Finally'**, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2Jspvt0bAM>.

Panel 1: Accountability for EAW- What have we learned and how to move forward? (Moderator: Amy Ochiel)

In the opening remarks by UN Women's Regional Director for East and Southern Africa, **Dr. Maxime Houinato** highlighted that strengthened accountability is facilitated when individual advocates, organizations, sectors and systems work in collaboration and in solidarity with each other. He noted that future efforts for EAWG must retain the principles of intersectionality, feminist leadership and transformation and the need to continue to expand the diversity of voices in dialogue and in design of efforts, actively promoting feminist leadership principles as part of accountable governance. He emphasized the need for greater financial investments and attention to prevention, considering also that efforts must start within ourselves and take a closer look at how our own institutions and organizations are structured and use power, and that we should be ready to go through a journey of transformation.

In his remarks, UNFPA's East and Southern Africa Regional Director, **Dr. Bannet Ndyanabangi**, highlighted that 19 African Union Member States still do not have national legislation on domestic violence and allocations remained low. He recalled the ICPD+25 commitments and UNFPA's work in support of the legislative frameworks, such as the recently adopted SADC Model Law on GBV, financing frameworks for investing in addressing GBV, and through partnerships, including under the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, is supporting VAW data, and Essential Services for survivors. He also reaffirmed the commitment to partnerships and the need to promote positive masculinities.

The Government of Kenya representative, **Honorable Dr. Linah Jebii Kilimo**, Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Public Service and Gender, Kenya highlighted the urgency of addressing GBV and shared the Government's twelve actions to eliminate GBV shared as part of their leadership of the Generation Equality GBV Action Coalition as well as their commitment to eliminate tolerance of female genital mutilation (FGM) by 2022. Among other actions, she highlighted the existing and planned investments of the State to CSOs providing frontline services to survivors (including shelters), the Polycare model of centralized services from police stations and the need for women's economic empowerment initiatives. She also noted the collaboration of various partners in the Generation Equality Secretariat, including senior leadership positions to ensure the work is advanced and reinforced the importance of working across countries, giving the example of efforts to end cross-border FGM.

Performance 2: Kenyan musician **Muhonja Mujega** singing *Unataka Nini*, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJvrh3H8Zw4&t=3s>

Panel 2: Using Diverse Platforms for Making Change in East & Southern Africa (Moderator: Thina Maphosa, YES! Trust Zimbabwe)

Her **Royal Highness Dr. Best Kemigisa Olimi** from the Council of Traditional Leaders in Africa was called for an urgent matter and could not join the event, but sent her remarks for the Dialogue. Her message called for all actors to increase attention to services for survivors of programmes addressing GBV, noting the links with gender inequality and unequal power dynamics. She noted the role traditional leaders could play to emphasize positive parenting, engaging men on the rights of women at community level, empowering women through training, addressing harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation, engaging community leaders, such as religious and cultural leaders on GBV and mobilizing youth through skills development and training to end against harmful practices. Remarks at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vLgO_zo3bVsZJ9feoLyRgLgFgMcUR1ty/view?usp=sharing .

Elizabeth Dartnall and Ayesha Mago from the Sexual Violence Research Initiative provided an overview of the Global Shared Research Agenda, highlighting its vision in contributing to EVAWG in a collaborative and influential way and the gap in investments for research on VAW compared to the scale of the problem. Liz noted the research landscape in Africa, noting power dynamics in the allocation of funds for research and in what knowledge is recognized. She also shared emerging ideas for ethical funding on VAWG, and how the Global Shared Research Agenda could be used by different actors to contribute to transforming research practices to align with feminist and decolonial approaches.

Call to Action: *Whether you are a researcher, policymaker, practitioner, funder, or activist, we invite you to join our community of diverse global voices committed to addressing violence against women and violence against children. Collaborations, partnerships are essential to building meaningful evidence to end VAW – this commitment must be partnered with more resources for research on this issue.* **Contact:** elizabeth@svri.org or ayesha@svri.org or www.svri.org

Relevant Links:

- Presentation: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OydjpQRmiTjm39x8Pcxs1tRlgKN-oWyD/view?usp=sharing>
- <https://www.svriforum2022.org/>
- <http://www.svri.org/documents/global-shared-research-agenda-vawg>
- <https://www.svri.org/funding-ethically-project>

Mary Balikungeri, Rwanda Women's Network and African Network of Women's Shelters shared a variety of models used of networking to influence change at different levels, from use of safe spaces, health and socio-economic support groups, while also using networks to mobilize women's leadership and apply tools such as scorecards within communities for improving accountability. She shared history of the African Network of Women's Shelters and the need to increase the centrality of grassroots women's groups and survivor-led efforts in advancing the work on EVAWG.

Reverend Bafana Khumalo from Sonke Gender Justice, South Africa reminded participants how GBV is embedded in patriarchy and fueled by toxic masculinity and also harms LGBTIQ persons. He noted the work with traditional and religious leaders to promote positive parenting and involvement in care work and the benefits of that work for both men and women. He noted South Africa's strategy on GBV and Femicide and the role all people can play to ensure policies are implemented. He reminded that the Campaign must be 365 days a year and highlighted actions that men could take to be accountable and call out perpetrators, while recognizing the leadership of women in EVAWG efforts. **Twitter:** @Mashobane61 and @SonkeTogether

Participant question on strategies to end VAW:

Answered by **Elizabeth Dartnall**: To effectively end VAW, programmes must understand and dismantle what drives this violence. A [study](#) building on the work done through the [What Works](#) programme shows us that men's use of violence against their partners is driven by poverty, patriarchal privilege, and the normative use of violence in interpersonal relationships. Factors that also increase the likelihood of men perpetrating VAW include childhood trauma, poor mental health and substance misuse, and poor communication and conflict in relationships. Disability status, and contexts of armed conflict, or post-conflict, further reinforce and exacerbate these risks.

The Panel was followed by a story of change from Zambian Youth and Women's Rights Activist **Wamweni Samundengu**, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Htd3Gs_9InM&t=3s

Panel 3: "Hand over the mic": Hearing Civil Society Calls to Action related to Enabling Policy Environment; Prevention; Essential Services and Funding for Women's Rights Organizations (Moderator: Thina Maphosa, YES! Trust Zimbabwe)

The session highlighted actions to improve the enabling policy environment; deepening work on prevention; ensuring access to essential services and the need for increased funding for women's rights organizations

Marion Ogeto from Equality Now Kenya highlighted findings from a study done under the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, with a focus on the 13 countries that had not yet signed the Maputo Protocol. She highlighted gaps in legal definitions and legislation, which do not reflect reality of violence taking place as well as the plural legal and justice systems, which challenge efforts to hold perpetrators to account. She also noted the linkages between social norms, lack of State investments in services and the effect of conflict on VAWG. **Contact:** mogeto@equalitynow.org

Lucky Kobugabe from the GBV Prevention Network in Uganda shared some of the changes seen in recent years, through advocacy to halt harmful legislation, and also noting the evidence generated that show prevention of violence is possible, such as via SASA!, Indashyikirwa and Stepping Stones initiatives. She highlighted the importance of investments in women's rights organizations, in strengthening movements and partnerships, maintaining a focus on accountability for women and keeping hope, with attention to self and collective care. **Contact:** lucky@raisingvoices.org

Josephine Chandiru, Steward Women, UN Trust Fund on EAW Grantee, South Sudan, shared the multi-sectoral assistance provided through the multi-year funds, which have facilitated one-stop centres to support survivors of sexual violence and child marriage. She noted the importance of services (physical and psycho-social, legal, services and economic livelihood support). *Call to Action: for donors to provide resources for shelters to allow survivors to have security and safely seek justice and accountability for ending GBV.*

Presentation: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bP45SLuzK6j1rj2j5u8j8_kjWbVUFEH/view?usp=sharing

Closing Remarks

Representing the European Union Delegation to the African Union, **Mrs. Maria-Luisa Troncoso**, Team Leader of Peace, Security, Governance & Migration Team within the Policy and Cooperation Section recalled challenges that remain even after 30 years of the 16 Days Campaign and reaffirmed the European Union's commitment to partnership and ending sexual and gender-based violence via various channels (political, diplomatic, programmatic and financial). She highlighted the unprecedented investment with the African Union, the UN and civil society via the Spotlight Initiative as an example of multilateralism in action and in closing, reminded participants that only through joining forces and speaking with a united voice can we end GBV.

Links Shared during Dialogue:

- Speaker Presentations: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1h-0Eh414WAkgO8YK-jzkP-5D_7PVsNc?usp=sharing
- Raising Voices and the SVRI guide on partnerships between researchers and activists <https://www.svri.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2020-10-08/Learning%20together%20brief.pdf>
- GBV Prevention Network 16 Days kit: <https://preventgbvafrica.org/taking-action/16-days/2021-theme-and-advocacy-kit/>
- UNTFs learning from practice series: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/learning-hub/prevention-series>
- UN Women's report on Measuring the shadow pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19: <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/vaw-rga>
- UN Women's Regional Analysis on Access to Justice in Africa: <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/events/2021/10/analytical-study-on-access-to-justice-for-victims-of-gbv-in-east-and-southern-africa#view>
- Coverage of the Dialogue: Twitter: <https://twitter.com/unwomenafrica/status/1463749831277658113>

Agenda (as Planned):

8:50 - 9:00	Participants join virtual space
9:00 - 9:05	Welcome participants and introduce session
9:05 – 9:10	Performance by Hellen Bulugu (Tanzania)
9:10 - 9:40	Panel Talk Show and Q&A: <i>Accountability for EAW – What have we learned and how to move forward?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Maxime Houinato, UN Women* East and Southern Africa Regional Director - Dr. Bannet Ndyabangi, UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Director - Honorable Dr. Linah Jebii Kilimo, Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Public Service and Gender, Kenya
9:40-9:45	Performance by Muhonja Mujega (Kenya)
9:45-10:15	Panel Talk Show and Q&A: <i>Using Diverse Platforms for Making Change in East & Southern Africa</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Her Royal Highness Queen Mother Best Olimi Kemigisa, Council of Traditional Leaders in Africa* (Uganda) - Elizabeth Dartnall and Ayesha Mago, Sexual Violence Research Initiative* - Mary Balikungeri, Rwanda Women's Network and African Network of Women's Shelters - Reverend Bafana Khumalo, Sonke Gender Justice (South Africa) Moderator: Thina Maphosa, YES! Trust Zimbabwe*
10:15-10:20	Story of Change: Youth and Women's Rights Activist Wamweni Samundengu (Zambia)
10:20-10:50	“Hand over the mic”: <i>Hearing Civil Society Calls to Action related to Enabling Policy Environment; Prevention; Essential Services and Funding for Women's Rights Organizations</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marion Ogeto, Equality Now (Kenya) - Lucky Kobugabe, GBV Prevention Network (Uganda) - Josephine Chandiru, Steward Women, UNTF VAW Grantee (South Sudan) - Dialogue Participants Moderator: Thina Maphosa, YES! Trust Zimbabwe*
10:50- 10:55	Closing Remarks: The value of cross-country investments for ending violence against women and girls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Thomas Huyghebaert, European Union Delegation to the African Union*
10:55-11:00	Performance: Ending Sexual Harassment -Samuel Semuddu (Uganda)

* GBV AC Leader and/or Commitment Maker