

The Zimbabwean Domestic Violence Bill to be tabled in parliament

The long awaited Domestic Violence Bill which has been on the lips of the women's movement in Zimbabwe has finally been approved by cabinet and should be debated in parliament when the next session opens in August.

"The bill has gone through cabinet and we should see it being tabled for discussions in parliament," said Caroline Matizha, Acting Director, Department of Gender in the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, in a Gender Forum meeting organized by UNIFEM at a local Hotel.

In her introductory remarks she also applauded the work civil society and funding partners are doing around the bill.

Emilia Muchawa, Director Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA), also had an opportunity to give an overview of the bill with the major highlight being:

- The provision for preventing violence – these are the establishment of a non-Domestic violence Committee comprised of govt, NGOs, churches, traditional leaders;
- A definition for DV which also include Emotional, verbal and psychological abuse e.g. repeated insults likely to cause mental injury; Economic abuse eg unreasonable disposal of economic resources or assets



Emilia Muchawa deliberating on the Bill (standing and Betty Makoni, chairperson of the Women's Coalition (Sitted)

The Media, legal and outreach committees and task forces that were created to coordinate activities around the bill also had an opportunity to present emerging issues as well as planned activities.

Emilia Muchawa, representing the legal committee also shared with the meeting a project called "using research in advocacy" and its aim is to collect data on the sentencing patterns in domestic violence cases in Zimbabwe.

"This idea was mooted by the Minister of Justice and the data should be ready before the next session of parliament she continued," she said.

On the way forward the meeting agreed to

- Continue lobbying and advocating but targeting on Members of Parliament and grassroot.
- Create standard messages for the campaign
- Collect the data the minister needs to defended the bill in parliament but also include the psycho-social aspect.

For more details contact

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