



*Apostolic Women
Empowerment Trust*

Inter-Apostolic
Women's Conference

2-4 September 2016

Mkoba Teachers College, Gweru Zimbabwe

Apostolic Women Unite Against Child Marriage.



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Acknowledgements

The undertaking of the Apostolic Women's conference involved many people. Therefore our profound appreciation goes to the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development for their role in making sure the Constitutional Court ruling was made on ending Child Marriage. We are greatly indebted to the sponsors of the conference namely.

1. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
2. Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)
3. Women University in Africa (WUA)
4. Plan International (PLAN)

We also wish to express our gratitude to the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperative Development (MoSME), Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC), Civil Society Organisations that came and shared knowledge, experience and provided support during the conference and Mkoba Teachers College for providing the venue.

To conclude, we wish to extend our thanks to all the Inter Apostolic Sects from all over the eight provinces in Zimbabwe that attended, the Namibian and United Kingdom (UK) delegations. Most of all, the Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust (AWET) staff members who worked tirelessly and made it possible for the conference to be successful.



Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANC	Antenatal Care
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
ARV	Anti-Retroviral
ASRHR	Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
AWET	Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
FHI	Family Health International
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MNCH	Maternal Newborn Child Health
MoHCC	Ministry of Health and Child Care
MoSME	Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises
PLAN	Plan International
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV
RECAP	Recapitulate
STI	Sexual Transmitted Infections
TB	Tuberculosis
UK	United Kingdom
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAHA	Women and Health Alliance International
WUA	Women University in Africa
ZWLA	Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association



Executive Summary

Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust (AWET) has achieved its first ever historical milestone since 1931 when the Apostolic Church started, addressing Child Marriage in Apostolic Churches, with the hosting of the inaugural Inter-Apostolic women's conference that lasted three days in Gweru at Mkoba Teachers College. The Inaugural Inter-Apostolic Women's conference ran under the theme: **"Apostolic Women Unite Against Child Marriage"**. The conference attracted over 400 delegates from Zimbabwe, Namibia and the UK. The event, built on the vision to empower the Apostolic Women including young women and adolescents in social and economic activities so as to exercise their rights had several significant informative sessions. Apostolic women, young and old, Government officials and experts from Non-Governmental Organisations gathered during the three conference days at Mkoba Teacher's College, Gweru, Zimbabwe. To openly dialogue, engage and discuss ways of ending Child Marriage within the Apostolic Churches. The fact that the inaugural Inter-Apostolic Women conference attracted an international interest shows the vital interest in the emancipation and empowerment of women on the continent and substantiates the conference as a truly African event.

The conference program featured the input of twelve speakers, including representatives from major organizations such as UNICEF, Plan International, Women's University in Africa (WUA), Family Health International (FHI360) and Non-Governmental speakers who made presentation. Representatives from the Government of Zimbabwe namely the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development (MoWAGCD), Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperative Development (MoSMECD), and Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC) were also present. Bringing together Apostolic Women from their different Apostolic Churches and leading experts and practitioners from Zimbabwe and beyond, the conference proved an excellent opportunity for information sharing in ending Child Marriage throughout the African Countries represented.

The conference provided opportunities for sharing latest data on how Child Marriages are impacting development of the girl child. Child Marriage is a problem which AWET in partnership with all relevant stakeholders is working tirelessly to find solutions on how to end through recommendations given by the women at the conference. The inaugural event enjoyed the support of major International and African Corporations and Development Agencies. Many of them used the platform to inform Apostolic Women on the need to end not reduce Child Marriage and urged the women to hold their own meetings and gathering in spreading the information on the need to end Child Marriage in Africa. From this conference, many Apostolic Women received the necessary information pertaining to opportunities that can improve socio-economic conditions for women

especially those in the remote areas of the country. The conference provided a platform for Government, Non-Governmental Organisations, Development Partners and Apostolic Women living in remote areas to engage in dialogue, forge direct communication opportunities and share challenges with views to craft poverty reduction strategies that positively impact development and empowerment of the Apostolic Women to end Child Marriage.

From this conference many Apostolic Women received the necessary information pertaining to opportunities that can improve socio-economic conditions for women especially those in the remote areas of the country.

Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust (AWET) has achieved its first ever historical milestone since 1931 when the Apostolic Church started, in addressing the Child Marriages in Apostolic Churches, with the hosting of the inaugural Inter-Apostolic women's conference that lasted three days in Gweru at Mkoba Teachers College



Executive Summary contd

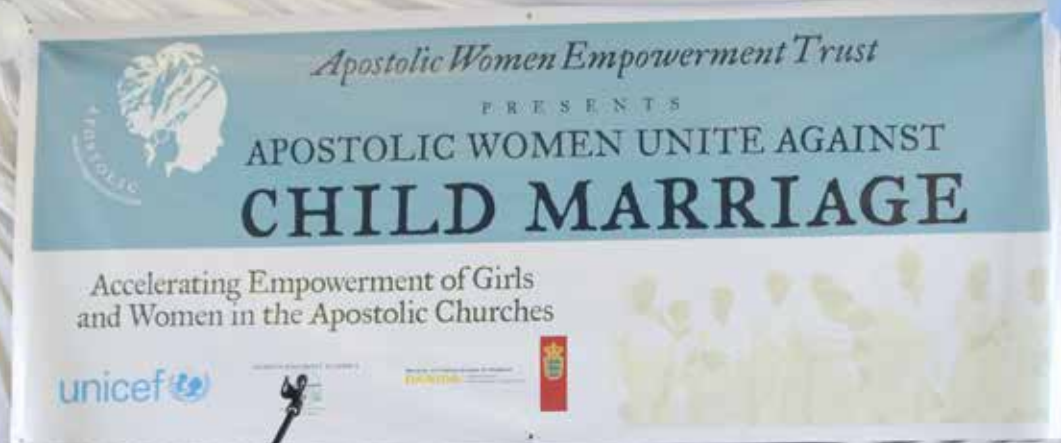
The conference also came up with specific recommendations to be implemented by all stakeholders in order to bring about positive change in the lives of all Apostolic Women. Apostolic Women from the various Inter-Apostolic Churches also concluded that the panacea to the issue of Child Marriage lay in alleviating livelihoods. Poverty was identified as one of the drivers of Child Marriage across the world. Hence AWET should initiate generating projects for the women. AWET was tasked to facilitate the accessing of birth certificates for all children as perpetrators seldom walk away as a result of children not having birth certificates. There was consensus and commitment among all the Apostolic Women from different provinces to actively engage in efforts to end Child Marriage and advance the rights of women and adolescents. The commitment charter (Communique) was signed by Apostolic Women from different Provinces and Apostolic Churches.



OPENING SESSION



The first ever Inter-Apostolic Women's Conference
in Zimbabwe to unite against Child Marriage



Welcome remarks

Welcome remarks by Mrs Tendayi Gudo

Mrs. Tendayi Gudo welcomed the Government Ministries present namely Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, MoSME, MoHCC, Minister of State for Provincial Affairs, Midlands in absentia, Provincial Administrator in absentia, experts already working tirelessly on ending Child Marriage in Zimbabwe UNICEF, DANIDA, Plan International, Women University in Africa, FHI360, World Vision, Child Line and Civil Society Organisations (CSO's) present. She extended a special welcome to all Apostolic Women from different Apostolic Churches with a special song. She expressed to the participants that they were now one Apostolic family with a goal to achieve good outcomes hence the need to treat each other with love and respect. She highlighted that according to UNICEF research states that households whose heads were Apostolic, Traditional and No religion had the highest proportion of child mothers (about 29% for each religion) hence there is need to address the situation. She encouraged everyone to feel free to participate, ask questions even through the secret ballot papers which were handed out. She highlighted the importance of filling in the registration, pre-evaluation forms and read the Code of Conduct which was in the Conference Pack.

She thanked everyone for attending so as to find solutions in ending Child Marriage in the Apostolic Churches if possible to 0% in the whole country.



Mrs Tendayi Gudo



Opening Session

Ms Catherine Makoni welcomed everyone present and was so excited to attend this first ever Inter-Apostolic Women's conference in Zimbabwe to unite against Child Marriage. She mentioned that UNICEF is part of United Nations and is a division which stands for the rights of children. She stated that, as UNICEF they support the government of Zimbabwe in supporting children's health, education and child protection. UNICEF is also working with the government on HIV and AIDS issues and water, sanitation and hygiene. She went on to declare that UNICEF is supporting the campaign to end Child Marriage which is a challenge that hinders the growth of the girl child and access to educational opportunities. She thanked DANIDA for supporting the initiative and for supporting the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development who are leading the process in government. She thanked Dr P. Gumbo, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry for attending the first ever Apostolic Women's Conference.

Opening session by Ms Catherine Makoni

Ms Catherine Makoni welcomed everyone present and was so excited to attend this first ever Inter-Apostolic Women's Conference in Zimbabwe to unite against Child Marriage



Ms Catherine Makoni



Objectives

Objectives

Ms Hope Dunira

Ms Hope Dunira welcomed everyone present and stressed out the theme of the conference **“Apostolic Women Unite Against Child Marriage”** She pointed out our focus on ending Child Marriage in the Apostolic Church. Although this was a first meeting, a lot of effort was needed from the participants to address ending Child Marriage. It wasn't going to be achieved over night but the first step was important hence the need to participate and acquire as much knowledge so as to impart positively back in our churches and communities. She mentioned that during the 3 (three) days we would talk about the drivers and effects of Child Marriage and urged everyone to participate and have solutions for positive deliverables in ending Child Marriage. She further stated that a research has been done by UNICEF and it shows that there is Child Marriage in the Apostolic Churches hence the need to put our heads together and come up with positive outcomes to put an end to Child Marriage. Ms Dunira applauded the Inter-Apostolic women's gathering as the historic conference saying it would create a platform to engage, open dialogue and discuss ways on how to end Child Marriage within Apostolic Churches.



IO



Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust
Apostolic women unite against child marriage.



Key Note Speech



Dr P. Gumbo
*Permanent Secretary
for Ministry of Women
Affairs, Gender and
Community Development
stressing a point*

**Key Note Speech By
Dr . Gumbo the
Permanent Secretary
for Ministry of Women
Affairs, Gender and
Community Development**

KEY NOTE SPEECH BY DR GUMBO PERMANENT SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF GENDER AND WOMEN AFFAIRS

*Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development Speech by the Permanent
Secretary for Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development **Dr. P. Gumbo***

At the Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust's Inaugural Women's Conference Under the Theme

"Apostolic Women Unite Against Child Marriage"

Midlands Province, 2 September 2016

Salutations

- The Minister of Small and Medium Enterprises, Honourable Stembiso Nyoni.
- The Minister of State for Provincial Affairs, Midlands, Honourable, Jason M .K Machaya (Sen).
- The Provincial Administrator and Representatives of Local Authorities.
- Senior Government Officials.
- Development Partners.
- Civil Society Organisations.
- Representatives of the Private Sector.
- Members from different Churches.
- Ladies and Gentlemen.
- Girls and Boys.

It gives me great pleasure to participate at this Inaugural Women's Conference organized by the Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust. The theme of this conference is **"Apostolic Women Unite Against Child Marriage"**.

II



Key Note Speech contd

**Key Note Speech By
Dr . Gumbo the
Permanent Secretary
for Ministry of Women
Affairs, Gender and
Community Development**

This theme resonates well with the campaigns government and development partners have embarked on to end Child Marriage in Zimbabwe. I want to congratulate the Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust for this very noble initiative of raising awareness on the anti-social nature of child marriage within the Apostolic Churches and in Zimbabwe in general. As the mothers of young girls this vice should be fought from all angles. I also want to commend the sponsors of this event UNICEF, Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), Plan International and Women's University in Africa for making this conference a success. I acknowledge and thank with profound gratitude the support of all the partners who are working flat-out on programmes to end Child Marriage and to empower the girl child in all the Districts and Provinces of Zimbabwe. **Dear congregants**, it is pleasing to note that women from different Apostolic churches are gathered here to open dialogue, engage and share perspectives with a view of coming up with resolutions on how best to tackle issues affecting women from the apostolic churches among them, Child Marriage. **Esteemed congregants**, we are here to share ideas on an issue that affects our national development and social coercion. During the course of our discussions we should reflect on the challenges being faced by our children especially gender based violence, discrimination, abuse and Child Marriage to mention but a few.

Child marriage is a form of Gender Based Violence (GBV) against the girl child which the International Community has collectively resolved to eliminate. GBV can be explained as any act perpetrated against women, men, girls and boys on the basis of their sex which causes or could cause physical, **sexual, psychological, emotional or economic harm**. This form of child abuse can have serious short and long term physical, psychological and social consequences not only for girls but also for their families and communities. Some of these are;

- Increased risk of HIV infection, and acquiring sexually transmitted diseases
- Significant greater risk of miscarriages and other complications during pregnancy including deaths.
- Drop outs from schools.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), State of the World Report 2015, Mashonaland Central leads in Child Marriage with 50%, in second place is Mashonaland West with 42%, Masvingo 39%, Mashonaland East 36%, Midlands 31%, Manicaland 30%, Matebeleland North 27%, Harare 19%, Matebeleland South 18% while Bulawayo has the least prevalence with about 10%. These statistics ladies and gentlemen are disheartening and what is most appalling about these cases is that the majority of these acts are perpetuated by family members and influential leaders in our communities.

I also want to underscore that issues of gender "*kuenzaniswa kwemukana pakati pevanhurume nevanhukadzi, vakomana nevasikana*";¹ is a development issue. Violation of rights and dignity of the girl, boy, men or women is an impediment to development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Zimbabwe is party to several International and Regional instruments which condemn violence against women and girls including Child Marriage. Among these is the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and the Beijing Platform for Action among others. This is a clear indication of global commitment to protect girls and ending Child Marriage.



To complement the International and Regional instruments, the Government has adopted the New Constitution which has been highly recognized as the Women's Constitution. Our Constitution provides that the age of marriage for both boys and girls is 18 years. The Constitution supersedes all legislative and customary legislation instituted in the country. In light of the current process of realignment of laws to the Constitution it means that the Marriage Act and the Customary Marriages Act shall be amended to align the laws to the provisions of the Constitution which sets the age of marriage at 18.

I also wish to share with you congregants some of the programmes my Ministry has initiated to raise awareness and end child marriage in our communities. In partnership with traditional leaders and other development partners the Ministry rolled out the 18+ campaign in selected Provinces which have high incidences of child marriage which include Mashonaland East, Manicaland and Mashonaland Central Provinces. This roll out has seen the sensitisation of **150** traditional leadership structures on the Constitution and legal provisions prohibiting Child Marriage, health, and economic consequences of this practice.

The Ministry developed the Girls and Young Women Empowerment Framework. This Framework set out strategies for protecting and empowering girls and young women in Zimbabwe. It is anchored on five strategic areas of intervention namely: Education, Economic Empowerment, Reproductive health the rights, Safety and protection and leadership development. The framework is currently guiding all relevant stakeholders working on girls and young women empowerment programmes.

The Ministry working with different Civil Society Organisations has been carrying out awareness campaigns through radio and TV programmes as well as dialogue in communities to sensitise people on the negative effects of child marriage particularly on the girl child as well as the nation at large. Currently the Ministry with assistance from development partners developed a National Action Plan and Communication Strategy to end Child Marriage which calls for the coordination of a multi sectoral response to the scourge of Child Marriage. The National Action Plan awaits approval by Cabinet. In conclusion, let me thank everyone "*vanamai, vanababa, vana mbuya nemadzisekuru*"² for the various roles you play around the life of the girl child. As we do so let's implore everyone to assume the role of protector and facilitate positive development. While we cherish some of our traditional, religious and customary practices the pledging of girls in marriage, "*kuzvarira, kuripira ngozi, kugadza mapfihwa*"³ among a host of practices are now in terms of our Constitution a violation of the girl child rights. These in other words are practices that emerge out of discrimination. The same goes for religious related acts of discrimination and violation of a girl's rights and dignity. We are saying to you let us all fight this scourge of child marriage. We want a Zimbabwe free from Child Marriage where girls can freely pursue their dreams and ambitions. Lastly I wish to urge all women to rise and shine in this struggle to fight this devil we call Child Marriage.

Arise And Shine.

I Thank You.

**Key Note Speech By
Dr . Gumbo the
Permanent Secretary
for Ministry of Women
Affairs, Gender and
Community Development**



Presentation on Maternal Newborn Child Health (MNCH)

**Presentation On
Maternal Newborn
Child Health (MNCH) By
Dr Nyikadzino Mahachi
From FHI360**



Dr Nyikadzino Mahachi

In his presentation Dr Mahachi first acknowledged Dr Gumbo from Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development and Dr Mushavi from the Ministry of Health and Child Care, UNICEF, Plan International and AWET who made the event possible. Dr Mahachi explained that Family Health International (FHI360) works on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) projects. He stated that FHI360 moves in different communities helping through HIV testing and giving people medication and are sponsored by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Dr Mahachi's key statement was on Child Marriage and the health implications. He noted that Mashonaland Central had the highest prevalence rates of Child Marriage⁴ and the Constitution of Zimbabwe does not permit a child to get married before the age of 18. He encouraged Apostolic Women to unite and say No to Child Marriage. "In Zimbabwe we do not want to decrease the rate of Child Marriage but we want to put an end to Child Marriage". He further stated that Child Marriage has had a high prevalence in Zimbabwe and the research carried out by UNICEF in 2014 noted that 1 in 3 women got married before the age of 18,⁵ showing this to be a major problem. Dr Mahachi highlighted that boys get married early, but this more prevalent in girls. According to research, 2 out of 10 girls are in polygamous marriages.⁶ He expressed disappointment that most girls are getting married off by men who are ten years older than them. Dr Mahachi highlighted the effects of Child Marriage on health with reference to girls who are not yet physically mature. He explained that most girls die during pregnancy or lose the child during delivery. He added that these young girls are prone to domestic violence and girls who get married early are at risk of being infected by HIV as well. Dr Mahachi explained why there was greater risk of a girl contracting HIV/AIDS if they are married off earlier and some of the reasons are stated below. Polygamous marriage.

- Lack of knowledge fear and cannot negotiate for safe sex methods.
- A child cannot make decisions.
- The husband will be on Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) and will keep it a secret from the wife.



Dr Mahachi explained some of the complications associated with pregnancy in young girls as including:

- Severe complications if the girl contracted malaria
- Post natal haemorrhaging;
- Post-natal depression in the young mother;
- Low birth weight;
- Obstetric fistula usually as a result of obstructed labour;
- Still birth

Dr Mahachi further explained that a leading cause of children dying during child birth is prolonged labour especial ly in girls 10-15 years old. He explained that obstructed labour is a factor in fistula, which results in the girls continuously leaking urine. Dr Mahachi noted that girls are at risk of contracting Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) because they cannot negotiate for safer sex hence a child forced into marriage faces biological physical risks. Moreover girls are at risk of contracting Sexual Transmitted Infections (STIs) because they cannot negotiate for safer sex methods hence a child forced into marriage faces biological and physical risks. Dr Mahachi explained how child brides can get cervical cancer especially those who are sexually active at a young age.

Question and Answer Segment with Dr. Mahachi

Q: Are there organizations that help victims of Child Marriage on maternalhealth?

A: On issues that concern maternal health the Ministry of Health and Child Care is the first port of call available.

Q: Is reaching menopause a sign that one should stop having sex?

A: No. There is no reason to stop you in having sex when you have reached menopause. The vagina gets dry because of hormonal changes in the body. You may contact your local clinic on how to deal with menopause during sexual intercourse.



Overview Of The Conference: Mrs Scholar Manyere

This session was chaired by Mrs Manyere from AWET who at the onset read out the guidelines that encouraged direct and maximization of participation.

Delegates were expected to speak openly on matters related to the experiences of Apostolic women.

Delegates were implored to listen and be tolerant with the views of others

Delegates were urged to visualize themselves as movers and shakers in the Apostolic Churches so they protect the children in their churches.

Video Clips by Awet

Video clip on Child Marriage was shown to bring reality to the issue being discussed at the conference. Most of the participants showed compassion for the child who was raped at a tender age by a man who was ten years older than her and was later forced in to marriage. The participants were stunned by the husband who stated that he did not know about the law that forbids Child Marriage. Most of the participants highlighted from the video clip they had learned that they should nurture their own children and not give another person to nurture them.

**Presentation On
Maternal Newborn
Child Health (MNCH) By
Dr Nyikadzino Mahachi
From FHI360**



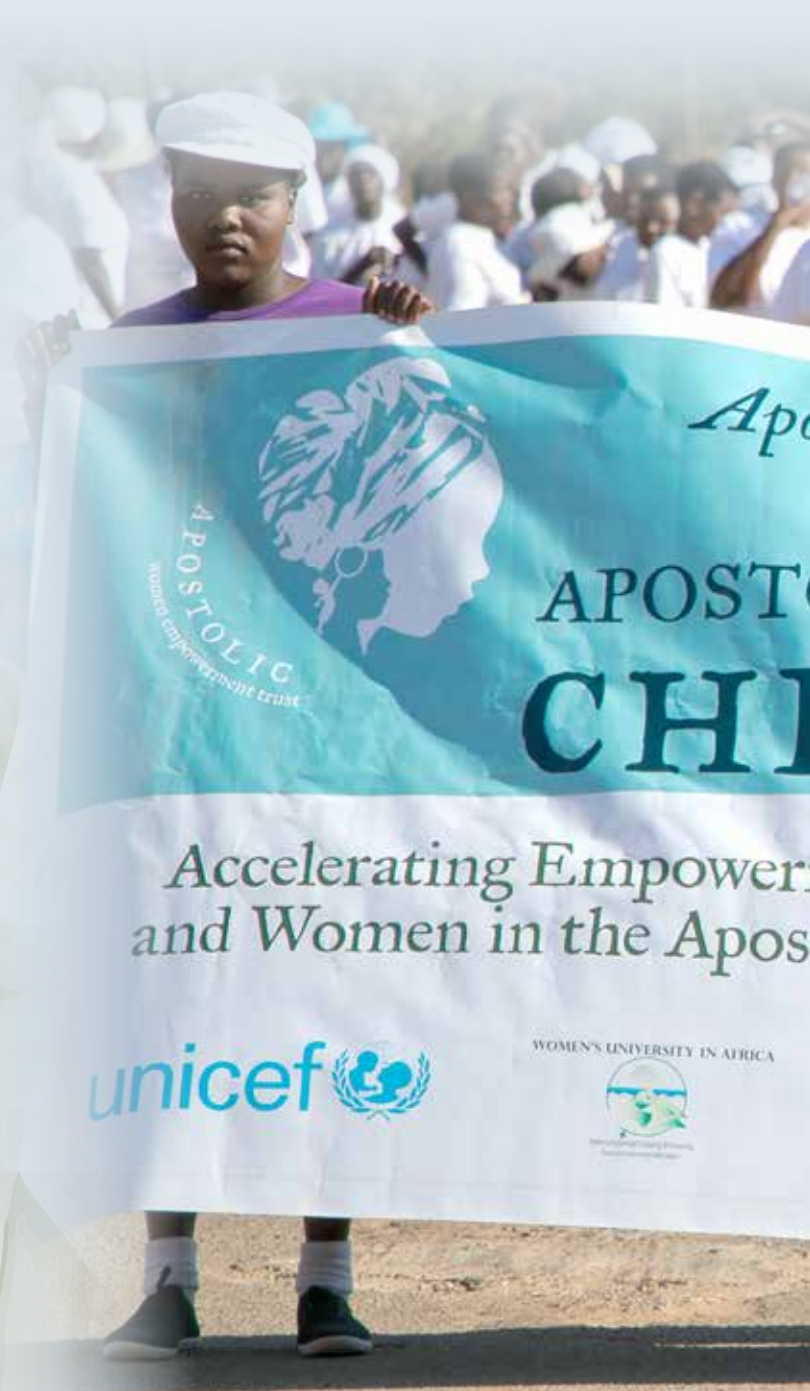
**Girls who marry
early are at risk
of contracting
HIV/AIDS As
they cannot
negotiate
for safer sex
methods**



The March



Women marched for 5 kilometers from Mkoba 6 to Mkoba 7. The march was well organized and started at 0830 hours prompt with a lot of jubilation and entertainment from the Apostolic drum majorettes. Public transport operators increased the magnitude of the cheers as they hooted to the passing Apostolic Women who held up placards, banners sending the message to stop and end Child Marriage through songs, t-shirt prints provided by the organizers as well as supporting development partners and stakeholders. More information to the public was disseminated through fliers as well. Placards held by the women had messages that Apostolic women unite against child marriages and encouraged children to stay longer in school.



The march paused for a moment near the central Mkoba shops where AWET members took turns to educate members of the public through informed speeches which received much cheers from the onlookers and the participating women. Adding more vibe to the march was the final part where representatives of different denominations in the Apostolic Churches took turns to sing and dance as they were celebrating the birth of the “**end child marriage**” movement by apostolic women.



SECOND SESSION



Recapitulate
(Recap) By Mrs
Scholar Manyere

Mrs Manyere emphasized the need for participating in order for everyone to leave the conference well informed about putting an end to Child Marriage. She reminded the participants to visit the Child Line desk which was outside and inquire about their services. She asked questions to see if participants were following.

What was the agreed slogan to Child Marriage?

What is Child Marriage?

What were the causes of Child Marriage?

What are the effects of Child Marriage?

Most of the participants showed that they appreciated and understood what they had learnt the previous day.



Mrs Scholar Manyere

“

Mrs Manyere reminded the participants to visit the Child Line desk which was outside and inquire about their services

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Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust
Apostolic women unite against child marriage.



Presentation On HIV/AIDS



Dr. Angela Mushavi

Presentation on HIV/AIDS by Dr. Angela Mushavi from the Ministry of Health and Child Care

Dr Mushavi started by explaining that as the Ministry of Health and Child Care, their interest in the conference was mainly in the areas of HIV/AIDS and the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT). The main issue which Dr Mushavi stressed was on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health. She mentioned that there are 37million HIV positive ⁷ people across the world and 1.4 million are in Zimbabwe ⁸. She took the audience to a low note when she pondered on the painful effects of deaths caused by HIV and AIDS therefore the need to protect the unborn babies is a move towards an HIV free generation. She explained that HIV and AIDS had an impact on economic growth when people became ill and died as a result. This resulted in a decrease in human capital.

Dr Mushavi urged participants to abstain if they are not yet married. Moreover she urged Apostolic Women who are married to be faithful use condoms correctly and consistently, encourage their husbands to be circumcised, delay sexual debut and seek early treatment for STIs. In her presentation she explained further on the prevention of blood borne HIV transmission. Dr Mushavi further explained the symptoms of TB. She stated TB as another cause of death in people living with HIV world wide. She encouraged Apostolic women to get tested especilay those who are pregnant. Moreover she emphasized that all Apostolic women who are pregnant, breast feeding and infected with HIV to initiate triple ARVs which should be maintained at least for the duration of mother to child transmission.



Presentation On HIV/AIDS

Presentation on HIV/AIDS by Dr. Angela Mushavi from Ministry of Health and Child Care

In concluding her presentation, she challenged Apostolic Women to take it as their responsibility to move towards an HIV free generation by going for pregnancy check-ups and HIV testing. During the same time as she demystified the fact of having one HIV positive individual in married couples. She advised AWET to bring both female and male condoms next time they have a conference or outreach programmes.

Question and Answer Segment with Dr Mushavi

Q: Does the sperm help a foetus grow during pregnancy

A: *It is a tradition passed from generation to generation but i think it is just a comic way of a man asking for sex from a pregnant wife*

Q: Why is blood expensive yet you mentioned that it's for free?

A: *The process of testing of blood through laboratories is one which makes blood expensive as it will be screened of HIV*



Presentation on Child Marriages

In her presentation Mrs Matsikiti stated that PLAN International is a Non-Governmental Organization mainly concerned with children especially the protection of the girl child. She explained the vision and the historical background on the establishment of the organization. She applauded UNICEF, DANIDA in making the conference a success in pursuit to ending Child Marriage. Mrs Matsikiti said “AWET shares a similar goal with PLAN because we have a “Girl child campaign”. She mentioned all the campaigns they are carrying out i.e. “Because I am a girl”, “18+ Campaign” and Count every child”. She explained that Child Marriage has a negative impact on the girl child because once she is married it destroys her future. Mrs Matsikiti stressed that Apostolic churches should stop discriminating against the girl child and advocate for gender equality. She urged all Apostolic Women to stop marrying off the girl child to avenging spirits. She mentioned some of the drivers of Child Marriage as the following:

- Culture/Customs,
- Religious beliefs,
- Poverty,
- Abusive parents
- Lack of knowledge

She pleaded with the participants that if a child arrives home late do not send her back but rather look for ways to counsel the child and keep her home so that she may carry on with her education and have a better tomorrow.

In conclusion Mrs Matsikiti thanked AWET and all the Apostolic Women for attending the gathering and their support in ending Child Marriage.

Question and Answer Segment with Mrs Matsikiti

Q: Some men will tell you that it is the law of the church and the child doesn't belong to the government, what can i do?

A: When it comes to protecting our children, let's lay our lives and protect our children. Always look for support from church and friends. The church is here today saying no to Child Marriage.



Mrs Matsikiti

Presentation on Child Marriages by Mrs Matsikiti from Plan International



Child Marriage has a negative impact on the girl child because once she is married it destroys her future

Guest of Honor Speech



*Mrs Moyo Deputy
Director in the
Minister's office in the
Ministry of Small and
Medium Enterprises
and Cooperatives*

Guest of Honor Speech
read by Mrs Moyo in
the Minister's office in
the Ministry of Small
and Medium Enterprises
and Cooperative
Development

**Speech By The Minister of Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperative
Development, Honourable S.G.G Nyoni at The Apostolic Women Empowerment
Trust Inaugural Women's Conference: 3 September 2016.**

Director of Ceremonies;

Government officials here present;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is my great pleasure to be invited to grace the Apostolic Women's Inaugural conference which is running under the theme, **"Apostolic Women Unite Against Child Marriage"**. I am told this is the first time Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust is running a women's conference. I am also reliably informed that various research has pointed out that a lot of Child Marriage are taking place within the Apostolic community and it is pleasing to note that you as the women in the Apostolic church have decided to bring this practice to an end. Statistics show that approximately 1 in every 3 girls in Zimbabwe are married before their 18th birthday⁹ and results indicate that child marriage (before 18) has been on the rise 31% and 34%¹⁰ which is a very worrisome trend. Child Marriage is a violation of children's rights and is also a direct form of discrimination against the girl child, who, as a result of the practice, is often deprived of her basic rights to health, education, development, and equality. Tradition, religion, and poverty continue to fuel the practice of child marriage, despite its strong association with adverse reproductive health outcomes and the lack of education for girls.



I am pleased that this event is going to be a yearly event with plans to broaden and grow hence more advocacy on the ending of child marriage. I am very confident that the plan will be achieved as women driven programmes never fail. I am also very confident that the plan for next year's event will include more women from all the different Apostolic churches who have failed to make it here due to various reasons as I believe there is power in unity and association building. This conference is a historical milestone for not only Apostolic Women and their communities but for all the women in Zimbabwe. As a woman I am pleased by the initiative AWET has taken to address key issues facing women and children and opening dialogue amongst yourselves with issues concerning children and women within your church and in society at large. It is encouraging to note that Apostolic Women are putting their heads together to solve issues such as Child Marriage, women and children's health issues and high illiteracy levels. The Ministry is proud to be part of this initiative and aims at uplifting and empowering women in the Apostolic Church so they can contribute substantively and concretely to the work of gender equality and economic empowerment of women in both the church and society of Zimbabwe. We all know Apostolic Women are largely responsible for raising families. Therefore Apostolic women's empowerment is a refreshing development which is key to achieving positive health, social and economic development outcomes.

As your theme says **"Apostolic Women Unite Against Child Marriage"**, we should and must recognize that history has placed the responsibility solely on the shoulders of this generation to find a path that will give lasting solutions to the violations that have been taking place against the girl child. This initiative will see AWET through help from our Ministry and other stake holders address challenges structural barriers to women's empowerment and gender equality that will see the reduction of forced child marriage due to poverty amongst other issues. We want the Apostolic Religion to be associated with positive things and progress, and women are key to influencing this. I urge you to embrace technology and use social media as a platform for awareness and advocacy. We want to eradicate poverty in the Apostolic church since it has been identified as one of the key

Guest of Honor Speech
read by Mrs Moyo in
the Minister's office in
the Ministry of Small
and Medium Enterprises
and Cooperative
Development

The Ministry is proud to be part of this initiative and aims at uplifting and empowering women in the Apostolic Church so they can contribute substantively and concretely to the work of gender equality and economic empowerment of women in both the church and society of Zimbabwe

drivers of Child Marriage and GBV especially among women. I am appealing to you all women today, to go and work hard whether in the informal sector or cooperate sectors so you can be able to find other sources of income that will help you to become self-sufficient and also help you to keep the laws of this land by not marrying off children for financial gain. As women, we can leverage our numbers and available technologies to raise awareness on key issues and champion transformation of religious and socio cultural norms and practices to address rights of children and women in health and development. My Ministry has several functions which include organising expos and facilitating participation of SMEs at both local and international exhibitions. Expos are platforms for SMEs to showcase their products to the market.



Guest of Honor Speech contd

Guest of Honor Speech
read by Mrs Moyo in
the Minister's office in
the Ministry of Small
and Medium Enterprises
and Cooperative
Development

My Ministry will assist in raising awareness of your existence among various stakeholders such as the local authorities, the Ministry and prospective customers. The facilitation of networking among entrepreneurs as well as creation of linkages with suppliers of raw materials. The Ministry also provides skills and management training that support entrepreneurship and growth of small businesses as well as cooperatives. Our mandate is to provide support to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), informal business and cooperatives with emphasis on programmes that advance entrepreneurship including women and youth to effectively contribute to job creation, economic growth and economic inclusion. It is my belief that, if we tackle one of the drivers of child marriage, which is poverty, we will have taken a very big step in reducing Child Marriage in the Apostolic Church. We understand the challenges facing the SMEs sector which include among other things financial constraints where the cost of borrowing money, the capital loan requirements and liquidity crunch have negatively affected SMEs. To curb this problem we recommend you to form powerful Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs) to address your financial needs. Inadequate workspace remains a major concern and as a Ministry we have engaged local authorities to mainstream SMEs workspace concerns in their planning. You are however urged to form associations to help you lobby with the local authorities and you can be heard more as an association than as individuals. I would like to encourage you as SMEs to strive for excellence in providing a high quality service.

In conclusion, allow me to thank all those who have made it possible for us to be gathered here on this day. I would like to commend the organisers for making this day a success. Success brings with it many challenges which require patience, enthusiasm, resilience and hard work. You are therefore urged to be focussed, empowered and be ethical as the women of today. Let me assure you that success is followed by money. By embarking on the journey you have started, know that you are now on the table and no longer on the menu as before. Your success as women will bring about a positive change in the way the girl child has been treated all along. My Ministry is always at your disposal crafting programmes that match your needs to ensure that you do not only grow religiously but also economically.

I encourage you with the word in the Bible Proverbs 31 verse 13. Be like a **Virtuous Woman, who works hard, who makes profit from her sales and invests for the future.** May God bless you.

I thank you.



Presentation On Gender Based Violence (GBV)

In her presentation she defined what GBV is. “Gender Based Violence is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed difference between males and females. It indulging acts inflict physical, sexual and mental suffering” She started off by showing statistics that on one in every three women is a victim of GBV at some point in time. She explained by giving an illustration from the participants and that anyone can be a victim of violence in one way or the other. She described the types of GBV and the audience were surprised as there were some issues they took for granted not realizing they were being abused.

“I thought it was just a tradition of man passing comments about my body when boarding public transport at a terminus” Sharon Nyaya

Through her informative presentation, Ms Makoni went on to explain the different types of GBV, which include economic abuse, forced virginity testing, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, and verbal abuse through to sexual abuse. She went on to give an analysis on how GBV causes injuries and financial loss during treatment when a victim has been injured. In her bid to encourage women to stop GBV, she mentioned women as perpetrators in some instances giving an example

of how women beat children and abuse children verbally and their husbands as well. The presentation was flowered by an interactive segment as the audience were pumping in questions which received informative answers:

Question and Answer Segment with Ms Makoni

Q: What do i do if my husband is taking the proceeds from my chicken project?

A: Seek intervention from family and friends so that they can talk to the husband. Avoid confronting him yourself if this would lead to violence

Q: What of situations where you report cases but no legal action is taken upon a rapist because the accused has a strong financial muscle?

A: There is need to

pursue the issue, so that justice is done. If it’s at the police station, you can ask to see senior police officers so that the case is handled properly. In addition organisations like the Msasa Project and Childline will try and assist victims of violence in such instances by making follow ups with relevant authorities

**Presentation by Ms Catherine Makoni—
UNICEF on Gender Based Violence (GBV)**



Gender Based Violence is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed difference between males and females.

Ms Catherine Makoni



Presentation on Education

Presentation By Mrs Janet Musiyiwa – Women's University In Africa On Education
Women education: its meaning and importance



The presenter started by urging all women to see the importance of education, Mrs. Musiyiwa showed her dedication to education through the story of her life as she told the attentive audience that she sold “freezits” and was once a house maid as she was gathering money for her school fees. She cited the importance of acquiring knowledge which might not always be academic but also knowledge in practical and technical knowledge which every woman should acquire. If a woman is empowered through education, if well incubated it will result in economic empowerment. She mentioned that more than 55% of the people who are not educated in the world are women therefore the need to move towards education empowerment of the women. She also stated that for this conference to be successful, money was needed so for the contribution of women in supporting their own conferences they also need to be financially stable consequently the need to be educated so as to be economically empowered. Concluding her presentation she encouraged women to initiate even small projects which do not require a lot of capital like scone baking and selling, on such a positive note, making sure that one has a profit everyday no matter how minimal

VIDEO CLIPS

A video clip was shown on what Child Marriage is, girls who have been married early and the effects on maternal health. How they managed to seek help through Women and Health Alliance International (WAHA) and knowledge on Child Marriage by Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA). This video was used to enlighten the audience. The audience showed empathy to the child who was married at an early age. Apostolic Women made a consensus of ending Child Marriage in their communities.

End of session



...more than 55% of the people who are not educated in the world are women therefore the need to move towards education empowerment of the women.

Mrs Janet Musiyiwa



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THIRD SESSION



A video clip was shown on what Child Marriage is, girls who have been married early and the effects on maternal health.



Presentation on Career Guidance

Presentation on Career Guidance by Mrs Chieza —Women University in Africa

She explained on the different degrees, and diplomas that are offered at WUA and the entry requirement, she urged all Apostolic Women to be educated. The silence in the room had the women digesting the need to be educated and one could note the enthusiasm they had through much agreement to the notion of starting economic empowering projects.

Moving on with her presentation, Mrs Chieza went on to ponder on social status and the boost for self-esteem that will stop docility in cases of mothers consenting to male supported Child Marriage. She went on to say having a better social status through education and high self-esteem also reduces chances of sleeping around and risking contraction of HIV/AIDS. Education is the key to unlocking job opportunities that every woman should have. An educated mother will always urge her daughters to get educated. Acquiring education will result in one not rushing into marriage therefore avoiding the presented health effects of childhood pregnancy. Further analysis in the presentation explained that human trafficking can be reduced by acquiring education as one would not be vulnerable to be invited for any kind of job.

Moreover she emphasised that as women one educated there should be a decrease in Child Marriage. Child Marriage in some cases involves girls as young as 6 or 8 years which always results in the end of a girl's schooling. The result is illiterate or barely literate young mothers without adequate tools to build healthy, educated families. Educated girls typically marry later, when they are better able to bear and care for their children. In addition to that, educated women with greater knowledge of health care and fewer pregnancies are less likely to die during pregnancy, childbirth, or during the postpartum period. Increased education of girls also leads to more female health care providers to assist with prenatal medical care, labour and delivery, delivery complications and emergencies, and follow-up care.

Concluding her presentation she said that the sustainability and progress of all regions depends on the success of women across the globe. She ended by quoting President Obama while addressing the United Nations General Assembly in 2012, "The future must not belong to those who bully women. It must be shaped by girls who go to school and those who stand for a world where our daughters can live their dreams just like our sons".



Mrs Chieza

Education is the key to unlocking job opportunities that every lady should have. An educated mother will always urge her daughters to get educated.



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Presentation From Unicef On U-Report

**Presentation By
Miss Gamuchirai
Garikai-UNICEF
On U-Report**

She explained what U-report is. “A free SMS social monitoring tool for community participation, designed to address issues that the population cares about. SMS polls and alerts are sent out to U-reporters and real-time response information is collected. Results and ideas are shared back with the community. Issues polled include among others health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, youth unemployment, HIV/AIDS, disease outbreaks; social welfare sectors”. Miss Garikai stated the purpose of U-Report with relevance to ending Child Marriage. She noted that U-Report helps to inform a person from anywhere in Zimbabwe on how to send and share information and this will help to report cases of GBV and child abuse. She clarified that UNICEF is not a Ministry but a Non-Governmental Organization that wants to end Child Marriage. The participants were taken through stage by stage on how to be registered on UReport by simply SMS to 33500 and it was exciting to be connected.

The purpose of U-Report is that
**...it helps in ending Child
Marriage and child abuse.**



Ms Garikai

Presentation by Claudius Chigaba from Child Line

Presentation by Claudius Chigaba from Child Line

Mr. Chigaba explained that ChildLine is mainly concerned with children especially on empowerment of the girl child. He urged all Apostolic Women to report cases of Child Marriage, child abuse and domestic violence so that they can get assistance because some of the cases have

to be handed over to the courts and police. Furthermore Mr. Chigaba emphasized the need to use suggestion boxes and U-Report to report cases of child marriage/ child abuse. In addition ChildLine has drop in centers in all provinces and all communities there are child care workers who help to make follow up on child issues. There are also child stop centers in Manicaland Mr. Chigaba urged everyone to use these services centers. In every school there is a guidance and counseling teacher. These teachers are there to help children who face abuse, and act as mechanism of child protectors. Moreover ChildLine works together with victim friendly unit. Mr. Chigaba informed the audience about the two cases on child abuse that had been reported to ChildLine during the progression of the conference.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SEGMENT WITH MR CHIGABA

Q: I am a teacher who reported a case of abuse and was victimized by the abused parents until I was transferred. What security can you offer if we report these cases.

A: We will be working with the police and security of those who report and the abused is our top priority in order for cases to be properly handled and dealt with.



Mr Claudius Chigaba

Presentation by Bruce from Saywhat



Bruce

Bruce gave a brief background of SayWhat as an organization which stands for Youth Empowerment. He said "As youth they should end Child Marriage". He added that the organization does not encourage youth to have sex before they are married. Early marriage puts the girl child at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and STIs because the girl will not be able to negotiate for safe sex as she will be regarded as a child. The only solution to curb the problem of Child Marriage is to abstain from sex and educate the youth about Adolescents Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR). He urged all Apostolic Women to educate their children both boys and girls about ASRHR.



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Out Comes

- At the end of it all, we achieved consensus on among the 400 Apostolic Women drawn from different Sects that there is need to curb Child Marriage.
- The delegates agreed there was need to come up with strategies aimed at empowerment of adolescents (boys, girls) and women with particular focus on the girl child.
- Delegates expressed the need for accurate information on Child Marriage and mandated AWET to come up with strategies for outreach programmes targeting Apostolic community.
- Delegates emphasised that AWET should come up with strategies to immediately engage men and ensure male participation in ensuring to end Child Marriage as head of families and communities and identify men who will be champions of change in ending Child Marriage.
- Delegates highlighted the need to be inclusive in all churches to respond to criminal elements within the faith sector which will assist in ending Child Marriage.
- Delegates called for a regulatory framework for all churches to respond to criminal elements within the faith sector which will assist in ending Child Marriage.
- Delegates appealed to AWET to engage in a process of a code of conduct which church leaders will sign as a solidarity in ending Child Marriage.
- Delegates identified the need to identify role models in the Apostolic Churches in order to encourage female children to remain in school and for Child Mothers to return to school.
- Delegates agreed on the need to identify role models from amongst and champions of the Apostolic girls who can be mentored and supported to be agents of change and spread the word that “IT CAN BE DONE”
- AWET was mandated to identify Apostolic Women to be trained in counselling to provide support to victims of Gender Based Violence.
- Delegates requested AWET to lobby for safe houses/services for women and girls under threat of GBV and Child Marriage.
- Delegates expressed the need for economic empowerment initiatives to allow Apostolic Women to respond to poverty reduction which was identified as one of the drivers to Child Marriage.
- Women from Tsholotsho highlighted the problem of human trafficking of girls to South Africa.
- AWET was asked to carry out outreach programmes in Tsholotsho and surrounding districts on this issue and reach out to police, schools, package information and plan to disseminate.
- A communique was issued on the consensus and commitment to end Child Marriage within the Apostolic churches.

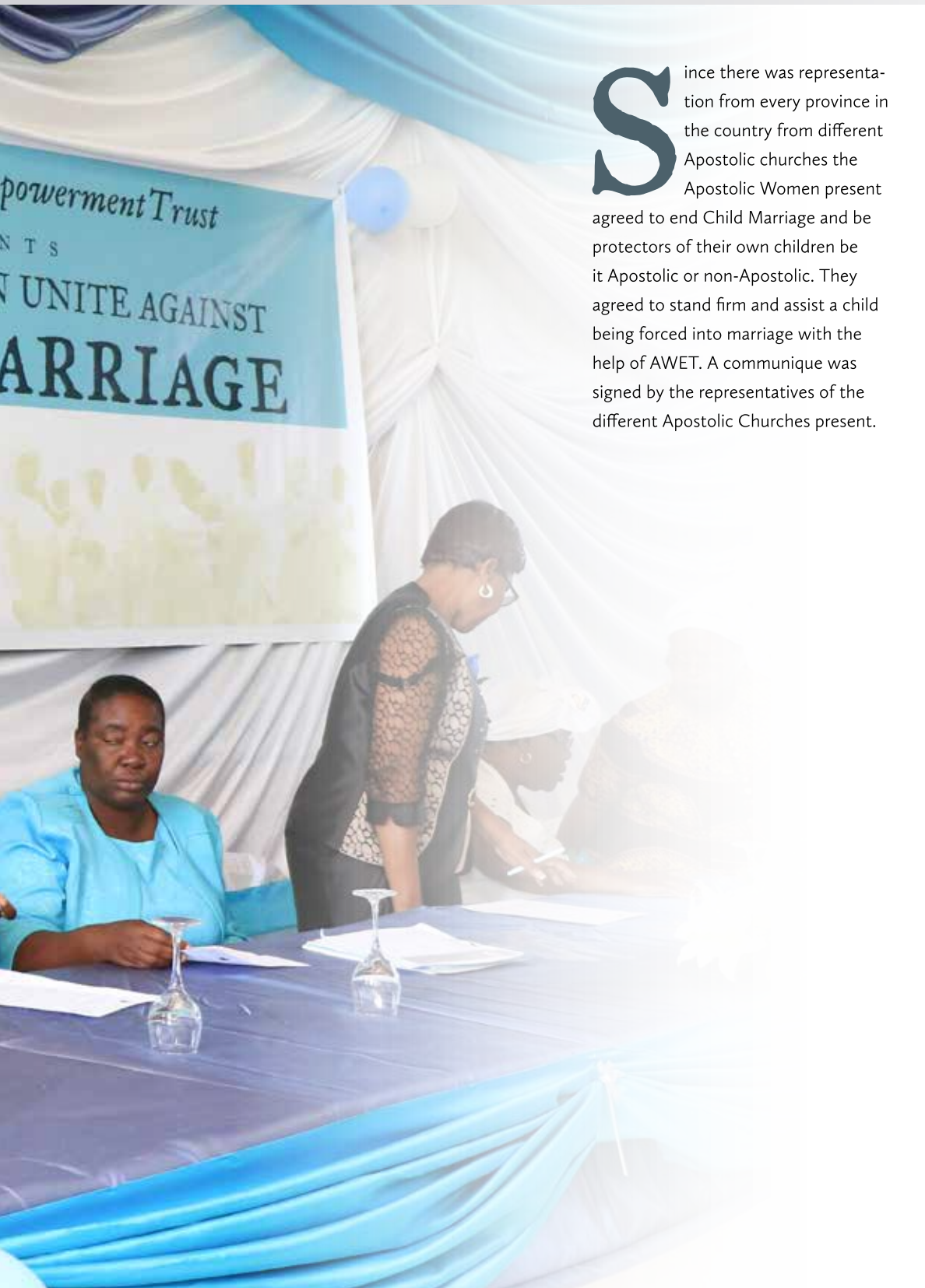


Resolution (Commitment Charter)



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Since there was representation from every province in the country from different Apostolic churches the Apostolic Women present agreed to end Child Marriage and be protectors of their own children be it Apostolic or non-Apostolic. They agreed to stand firm and assist a child being forced into marriage with the help of AWET. A communique was signed by the representatives of the different Apostolic Churches present.

Resolution (Commitment Charter)



Resolution [Commitment Charter]contd



4 Beit Avenue Milton Park
Harare, Zimbabwe
Tel: +263 4 796052, 764370
796328, 764378
Cell: +263 772 700 987. 712 865 764
Email: tgudo@awet.co.zw
Web: www.awet.org.zw

APOSTOLIC WOMEN EMPOWERMENT TRUST MKOBA TEACHER'S COLLEGE, GWERU, ZIMBABWE

4 SEPTEMBER 2016

COMMUNIQUE

WE, members of the Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe, having converged at Mkoba Teacher's College, Gweru, Zimbabwe, from 2 to 4 September 2016, for the **Inaugural Apostolic Women's Conference**, convened by the Apostolic Women Empowerment Trust (AWET) in partnership with UNICEF, DANIDA, Plan International Zimbabwe, Women's University, Ministry of Gender and Women Affairs, Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and civic society,

- **Acknowledge and commend** the efforts made by the government of Zimbabwe in ending Child Marriages, including on-going efforts towards the alignment of laws that are harmful to children.
- **Recognise and appreciate** the current efforts in Zimbabwe to improve the status of girls such as in education. We specifically commend and acknowledge the drive and efforts of all development partners already spear heading the move to end child marriage in Zimbabwe.
- **Recognise** that Child Marriage is a harmful practice that despite the efforts of various actors continues to persist in Zimbabwe and remarkably undermines the best interests of the girl child;
- **Note** with concern that child marriage robs thousands of girls in the Apostolic sector of their childhood; it forces them out of education and into a life of poor prospects with increased risk of violence, abuse, ill health or early death.

1 | Page



- We, the women of Apostolic Churches gathered here at Mkoba Teachers College, have agreed therefore to:

- We will stand firm as women and as mothers to be positive role models to our children especially the girls.

Botswana

H. K. B. S. munhusha
c.m.p. Johane masowe
B. Nyenyedzi Nom

S Dombó

Fig. 1. The effect of the concentration of the solution on the rate of the reaction.

May 1964

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Launch of Pass on the Gift

Launch Of Pass On The Gift To End Child Marriage

AWET launched a “Pass on the Gift to end Child Marriage” project to Shurugwi under which 10 goats were given to an identified group of Apostolic Women. The project is part of economic development process to address the key driver of Child Marriage.



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Closing Remarks



Closing remarks by
Mrs Dube of Ministry
of Women Affairs,
Gender and Community
Development

Mrs Dube applauded AWET for putting together such a historical conference in the Apostolic Churches and was pleased to note positive outcomes from the participants and promised to take up issues which really do affect her ministry so that they can be addressed. She encouraged role models to continue to do good and join hands in ending Child Marriage. She emphasized participants to end Child Marriage and every Apostolic Women be a protector of her own children.

Solidarity Remarks



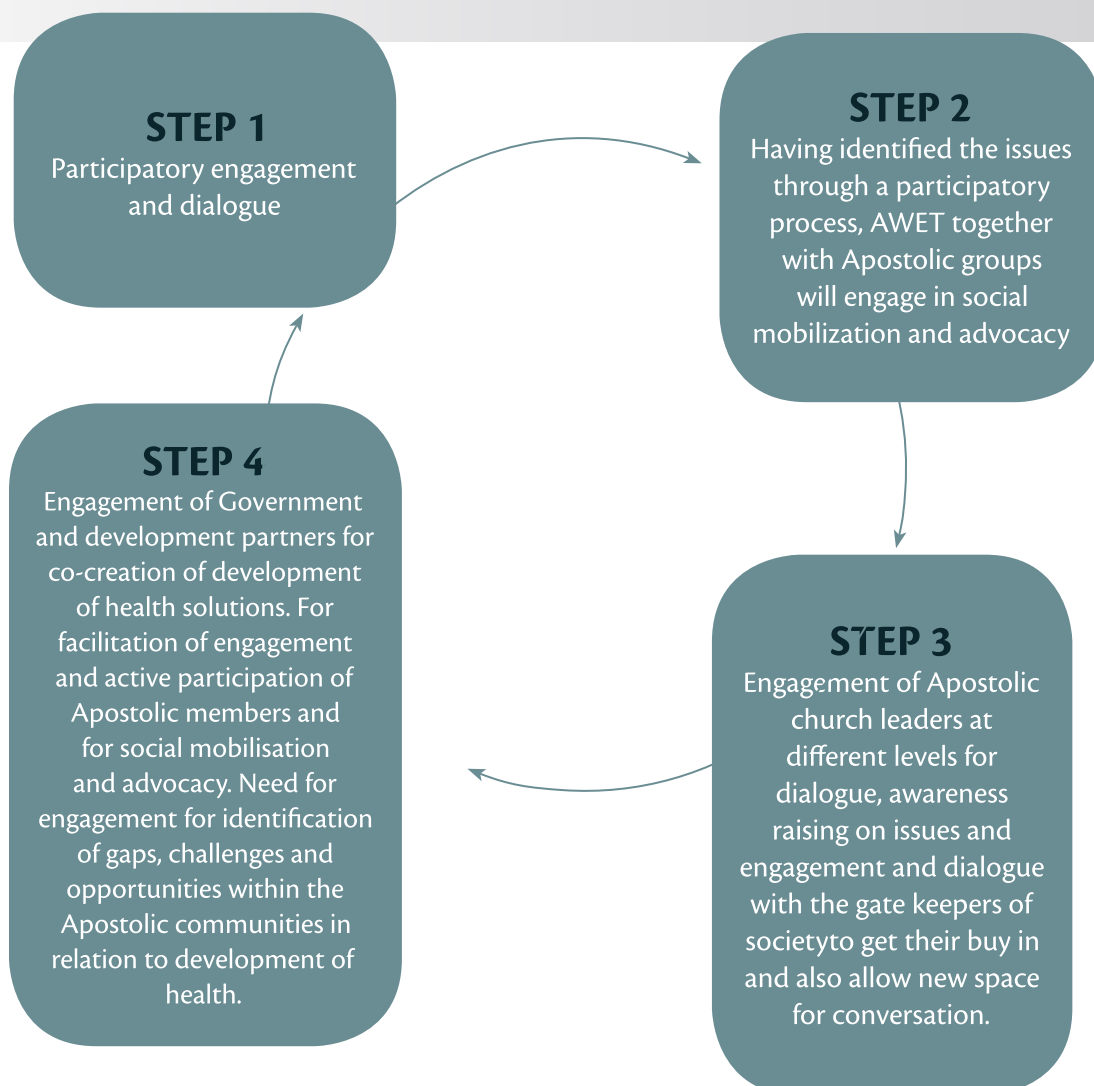
Tinashe

Tinashe thanked all the delegates that had attended the conference. She urged all the Apostolic Women to be agents of change in their communities by ending Child Marriage. She stated that UNICEF will support AWET in all their projects and capacity building programmes to end Child Marriage in the Apostolic Churches.

Solidarity Remarks By
Tinashe-UNICEF



Way Forward



Conclusion

The inaugural inter Apostolic women's conference was a resounding success. Firstly it was very well attended by an enthusiastic group of participants hailing from all the provinces in Zimbabwe, Namibia and UK. It was a rainbow coalition of women who wanted to ensure that their destiny of ending Child Marriage was in their own hands. The conference was conducted in a spirit of national solidarity with the Apostolic Women from remote areas attending. These are the people who continue to carry the heaviest burden of Child Marriage and poverty. Secondly, the recommendation adopted at the conference provide the Apostolic Women with clear mandate to demand their rights to protection as well as increased access to natural and financial resources and to end Child Marriage and improve livelihood. Thirdly, the inaugural inter Apostolic Women's conference managed to meet the expectations through providing a platform for the government, civil society, the private sector and the Apostolic Women to engage in dialogue, forge direct communication opportunities and share challenges with the view to ending Child Marriage, poverty reduction and community development.



Annex



1. Registration
2. Johanne Masowe Yeguwo Tsuku Yechishanu
3. Namibian Delegate Johanne Masowe
4. Reformed Church
5. Johanne Masowe Yerushanga
6. Johanne Masowe Yenenyedzi Nomwe
7. Johanne Masowe Chishanu Yenenyedzi
8. Johanne Marange
9. Moritus





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Apostolic Women Unite Against Child Marriage.