



## **ADDRESSING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE - LAUNCH OF THE MONGU USER FRIENDLY FAST TRACK COURT FOR GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

**Mongu, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2018** – The Judiciary of Zambia and the UN Joint Programme on Gender-Based Violence with financial support from the Governments of Sweden, United Kingdom and Ireland on Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2018 launched Zambia's third user friendly fast track court for Gender Based Violence (GBV) at Mongu, Zambia. The court was officially launched by the Deputy Chief Justice of the Republic of Zambia Hon. Mr. Justice Marvin S. Mwanamwambwa and the United Nations Resident Coordinator Ms. Janet Rogan.

The Hon. Deputy Chief Justice gave a brief background to the birth of the Gender Based Violence User-friendly Fast Track Courts when he said that *“in 2012, the Judiciary through the Zambia Association of Women Judges (ZAWJ) held a consultative Symposium under the theme “Gender Based Violence: the way Forward” with support from the Irish and Swedish governments through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The UNDP thereafter through the Zambia Law Development Commission embarked on modalities for raising funds for establishing these specialized courts.”*

On 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2016, Government in partnership with the UN Joint Programme on GBV launched the country's first ever user-friendly fast track court for Gender Based Violence (GBV) at Kabwe and subsequently launched the GBV Fast Track court at Lusaka in March 2016. The concept of Fast Track courts for GBV cases is being pioneered at provincial level across Zambia.

His Lordship hastened to underline the fact that these achievements are a collective input of all stakeholders in the fight against GBV.

Since the start of this programme to upgrade the Anti-GBV Act and introduce Fast Track Courts, the level of reporting of GBV cases across the country has steadily risen. Over 750 GBV related cases have been handled in Lusaka and Kabwe since their introduction in 2016.

Gender equality is an integral aspect of the 2030 development agenda – both as a goal (SDG 5) but also as a vital component of achieving progress across all the other sustainable development goals. Therefore, the United Nations and the Government of Zambia has committed to an end to gender-based violence and harmful practices by 2030, the year when the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are due to be achieved. Therefore, rule of law and access to justice as prerequisites in the fight against GBV and the need to uphold them as corner stones of the judicial system. Gender violence is a serious public health concern that also impedes the crucial role of women and girls in development

*“Gender Based Violence is a Human Rights issue. Globally gender-based violence of many forms continue to persist. And Zambia as country has not been spared. In Zambia, incidences of Gender Based Violence are high. Despite the many interventions and political will to combat GBV, annual data from the Zambia Police show an increase in reporting of Gender Based Violence crimes. There are **21,504** cases of Gender Based Violence reported country-wide during the year **2017**”*

Three (3) more courts, namely Choma, Chipata and Ndola are scheduled to be launched before the end of 2018.

“In sub-Saharan Africa, the gender gap is estimated to cost the continent at least USD 95 billion every year (*UNDP's Africa Human Development Report 2016, Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Africa*). Gender-based violence has no place in the world we want.”

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