

Speech for Launching of 16 Days of Activism on Violence against Women, Dar es Salaam on 25th November 2016

Mheshimiwa mgeni rasmi – Angela Kairuki – Waziri wa Ofisi ya Rais,
Menejiment utumishi wa umma na utawala bora,
Waheshimiwa mawaziri na viongozi wote wa Serikali,
Waheshimiwa wageni waalikwa, mabibi na mabwana
Habari za asubuhi?

*Honourable Angela Kairuki – Minister of State, President's Office,
Public Service Management and Good Governance,
Honourable Ministers and Government officials
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.....
Good morning!!!*

Napenda kuchukua nafasi hii kuwashukuru sana kwa kunialika kuongea nanyi siku hii ya leo ambayo tunaadhimisha siku ya kimataifa ya kupinga ukatili dhidi ya wanawake na mwanzo wa kampeni ya siku 16 za kupinga ukatili wa kijinsia.

It is a great pleasure to be with you this morning as we mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the beginning of the '16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence'. And it is great to see people from Government, UN agencies, Development Partners, Private sector, CSOs, activists, men and women here to speak with one voice on the need to eliminate gender-based violence.

Gender-based violence, whether physical, sexual, emotional or economic, is recognised globally as one of the most widespread and persistent violations of the rights of women and girls. It is a universal problem; it cuts across geography, class and culture. It is certainly not unique to Tanzania – in Ireland and in other countries where I have worked I have seen gender based violence, rooted in poverty, conflict and in unequal power dynamics. Evidence suggests that climate change is also contributing to gender based violence.

Today, more than twenty years after the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, one in three women experience physical or sexual violence. This is unacceptable and reminds us of the need to redouble our efforts.

In Tanzania, the most recent statistics tell us that almost 40% of women have experienced physical violence, and one in five women have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. This comes at a significant cost not just to the women concerned but to their families, their communities and to the country as a whole. It is estimated that the loss in productivity associated with intimate partner violence alone amounts to 1.2% of Tanzania's GDP.

It is clear that the fight against poverty and injustice will only bear fruit if we invest in addressing the root causes of gender inequalities and GBV in our families, societies and nations.

I am pleased that the need to eradicate violence has been recognised in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and specific indicators and targets have been agreed by which we can measure progress and hold ourselves to account. Ireland, together with Kenya, played a central role in this process as the co-facilitators of the final phase of negotiations of Agenda 2030. Throughout this process, Ireland advocated strongly for a specific goal on gender equality and empowering women and girls. We argued for specific targets on harmful practices such as early or forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Agenda 2030 is a very positive framework and Ireland (and of course other DPs) are firmly committed to meeting these targets in our own countries too. We stand ready to support Tanzania in translating the SDGs into national targets and in achieving results.

This year's national theme for the 16 days of activism on Violence against Women is

FUNGUKA ! PINGA UKA-TILI WA KI-JIN-SIA: ELIMU SALAMA KWA WOTE.

Gender based violence in schools is a major barrier to children accessing their right to education. As we know, accessing quality education empowers women and promotes better health and livelihoods for them and for their children. For example, a child born to a mother who can read is 50% more likely to survive past the age of 5 and the children of educated mothers are more likely to be nourished and vaccinated. The benefits of educating girls, therefore, have a positive ripple effect on families and societies.

However, despite progress over the last decade, the right to education is still denied to an unacceptably large number of girls today. Girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence in school and the impact of this violence on their health and personal development is especially severe. The simple truth is that, for many girls, school is not a safe place to learn. Violence is committed by students or teachers in or around the school, or by adults who approach students on their way to and from school.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Early marriage can have a devastating impact on education outcomes. Recent studies in Tanzania have shown an increase in teenage pregnancy, [largely contributed to by social and cultural factors that prolong gender inequalities and discrimination against women and girls]. On average 4 out of every 10 girls will be married before their eighteenth birthday¹.

Keeping girls in school is essential to preventing early marriage and teenage pregnancy. Girls with secondary schooling are less likely to marry as children, making education one of the best strategies for protecting girls and combating early marriage.

¹ National Bureau of Statistics and ICF macro, 2011

Government and society have a role to play more generally in encouraging and supporting girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy. We should support girls to re-engage in education as soon as possible after childbirth. Pregnancy should not prevent girls from completing their education. In fact the responsibility of raising a child is a compelling reason to stay in education, and become economically independent.

There can be no doubt that the journey towards equality and the empowerment of women remains a significant one. Tanzania has already made great strides – most notably in the level of representation of women in political and democratic decision making organs such as the parliament. There can also be no doubt that there is still much more to be done.

If we are to be successful in our journey we need to see changes in attitudes in society related to masculinity. We must continue to engage men and particularly young boys in challenging ideas of what it means to be a man. This, of course, must not be limited to engaging the minority of men who have committed violence themselves, but also include those men who allow violence, through their silence. Young boys need role models who challenge violence against women and who show them that such violence is a sign of weakness rather than manliness.

I welcome the National Plan of Action to end Violence Against Women and Children which will launch soon. The plan has the transformation of social norms and women's economic empowerment at its heart. This is a good step and let me assure you that Ireland and other Development Partners are committed to work together and support you to make violence against women unacceptable everywhere.

Finally let me acknowledge the work of our partner WILDAF in coordinating the 16 days Campaign. It has become a national landmark in the Tanzanian calendar with events taking place all around the country. We are proud to be a partner to WILDAF and a partner to Tanzania.

Ahsanteni sana.-

FUNGUKA ! PINGA UKATILI WA KIJINSIA: ELIMU SALAMA KWA WOTE.

Paul Sherlock

Ambassador – Embassy of Ireland