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A Commission for Gender Equality Newsletter

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CGE Tells Universities To Improve Sexual Harassment Policies And Increase Gender Equity

By: Lungelo Mesh & Keletso Rampeng

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) has told three institutions of higher learning to revise their sexual harassment policies and put in place measures to ensure that employees are protected from gender discrimination and abuse. The Commission also asked the universities to run sexual-harassment awareness workshops and pay attention to their employment equity to include more women in leadership positions.

Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMHSU) Walter Sisulu University (WSU), Fort Hare University (UFH) and University of the Western Cape (UWC) appeared before the Commission on 19 – 20 September in Kempton Park, to account on the state of gender transformation in their workplaces. The CGE also probed the institutions on their sexual harassment policies, employment equity plans, and provisions for persons with disabilities and members of the LGBTQIA community. "We established a task team in 2019 aimed at dealing with GBV matters in the institution," said Vice-Chancellor at UFH, Prof Sekhale Buhlungu. Representing WSU



Sefako Makgatho University Delegates noting recommendations from CGE Commissioners and Legal Department.

was Vice Chancellor Professor Rushiell Songca, "In 2022 we implemented gender-based violence awareness with external stakeholders and engaged men on GBV related issues. We also addressed the LGBTQIA+ community on issues they face and engaged with women and men on fostering Equality" she said. CGE Commissioners raised concerns about some of the universities' policies being outdated and asked the Vice Chancellors to address that Commissioner Advocate Thando Gumede said universities should prevent potential discrimination and be responsive to the country's social ills, "We

would like to see institutions of higher learning moving towards creating a holistic culture of equity and constitutional democracy in their environments, they should move away from creating copy and paste ad hoc policies and create anti gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) policies" Gumede added. "The journey is still long but it is imperative for institutions of higher learning to transform in order to feed into the development of our country and help create a non-sexist South Africa" said CGE Commissioner Ohara Ngoma-Diseko.

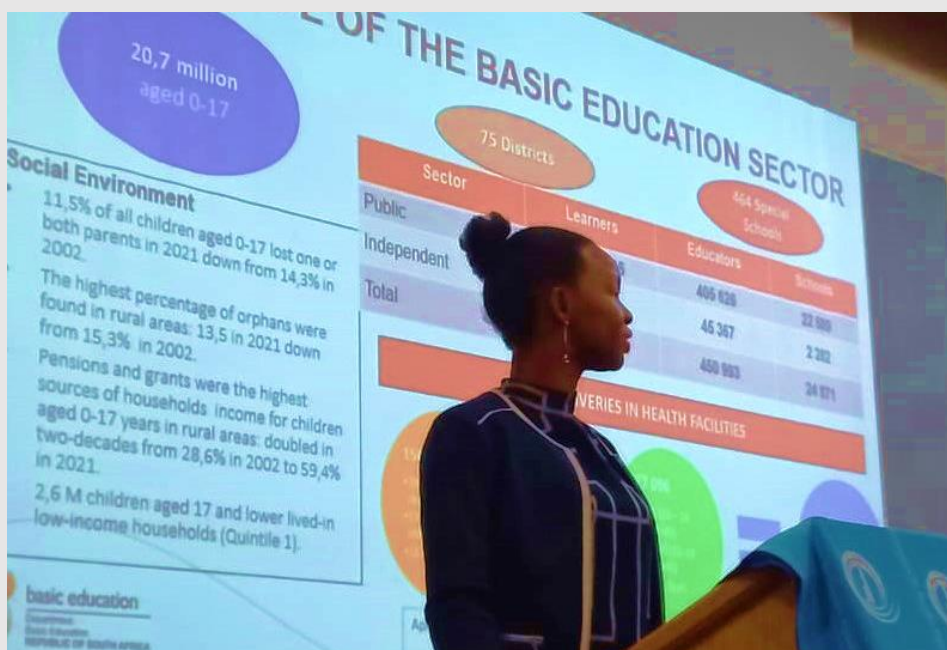
Engaging Men and Boys on Their Role in Fighting Gender-Based Violence and Inequality

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) joined the "Monna-Indoda" non-governmental organisation (NGO) to engage men and boys on their role in society. In his address CGE's Spokesperson Javu Baloyi said men are inherently beneficiaries of a patriarchal system that looked down on women and girls.

"This system has carried norms and values that continue to demean, objectify and degrade women" he said. "Words like 'our women' should move from our vocabulary. It is not our women, it is women. We must not in any manner shape or form try to reduce their agency to commodities. Women are very capable to hold their own against their male counterparts if not better" Baloyi said, "It is for this reason that we begin to decode the language we use" he added.

The 'Monna-Indoda' non-governmental organisation held a session for men on 16 September in Mabopane where more than 50 men and boys attended. The session was to encourage men to talk and be capacitated with information so that they can be part of the solution to gender inequality. "Partnerships and collaborations such as these are essential so that we can inculcate positive values in the boy child" Baloyi concluded.

CGE And Stakeholders Seek Ways To Curb Learner Pregnancy Crisis



The Departments of Basic Education and Health are collaborating with each other and coordinating programmes to intervene in the learner pregnancy crisis unfolding in the country. Representatives from the two departments were speaking at a high-level stakeholder engagement hosted by the Commission for Gender Equality in Gauteng in Johannesburg on Wednesday. The session was held to discuss collaboration opportunities by various role players in preventing teenage pregnancy and addressing the challenge of pregnant girls dropping out of school. Commission for Gender Equality's Provincial Manager in Gauteng, Khutso Monyepao said the purpose of the stakeholder engagement was to bring critical organisations together to strengthen

working relations, "The Commission will maintain close liaison with like-minded organisations who share our objectives, to foster common policy interventions", she said. Mrs BA Nokama said the department of Basic Education has been proactively responding to young people's SRH challenges over the years and is looking at more legislative interventions to attend to policy gaps, "Our integrated school health policy provides sexual and reproductive health services to learners according to their age. We want pregnant learners to remain in school during and after pregnancy" she said. CGE's Head of Research, Dr Thembinkosi Twalo shared information on the commission's recently released study on factors behind teenage pregnancy. "Our study was focused on three provinces with the highest prevalence of teenage pregnancy, Limpopo, Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal, which are predominantly rural with high unemployment.



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Finding Solutions To Stop School Drop-Out Of Adolescent Girls And Teenage Pregnancy



CGE's Head of Policy and Research, Dr Thembinkosi Twalo addresses stakeholders during the Policy Dialogue held in Polokwane, Limpopo.

By: Lungelo Mesh

According to Statistics SA (Stats SA), South Africa has one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates globally. Statistics released by Stats SA indicate that 90 037 girls between 10-19 years old gave birth between March 2021 to April 2022 in all nine provinces. The Commission For Gender Equality (CGE) held its second policy dialogue on school-drop out of adolescent girls in Polokwane on 15 September 2023, following the release of its research report on the effects of teenage pregnancy on learners in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Eastern Cape. The CGE engaged stakeholders such as the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Department of Sport, Arts and Culture,

NASACO, Department of Basic Education, Beyond Zero and Department of Social Development. "We undertook this study because we saw that teenage pregnancy and school drop-out by teenage mothers remain a challenge in communities, so we are here today to disseminate the research findings from this study" said CGE's Head of Research, Dr Thembinkosi Twalo during his opening remarks at the session. "We want to engage as many stakeholders as possible, to spread the message around the causes of teenage pregnancy, and to find a way forward on how we can deal with this challenge. We are looking forward to the resolutions and implementations that will be taken from this dialogue" he added.

Naledi Selebano, CGE's Research Deputy Director said that Limpopo has been ranked second on the list of provinces with the highest number of births recorded among children aged 10 to 17 in the 2019/20 financial year. "Knowledge and the use of contraceptives are reportedly low among adolescents in the province, with the study illustrating that 29% of female adolescents had experienced sexual debut before the age of 14", added Ms. Selebano. During the discussions, some stakeholders said there is a need for health awareness to be taken to schools and learners to be taught in their languages on health-related issues.

CGE Assesses Thuthuzela Care Centres in Rural Eastern Cape



Commissioner Leonashia Leigh-Van Der Merwe conducted an oversight visit at Tylor Bequest Thuthuzela Care Centre (TCC) in Matatiele, Oliva Tambo and Adelaide TCC in Bizana, and Lusikisiki TCC in the Eastern Cape on 07 September 2023. The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) regularly visits Thuthuzela Care Centres to assess and monitor the level of compliance with expected standards for supporting victims and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). Commissioner Van Der Merwe made the first stop at Tylor Bequest TCC where staff dealing with victims and survivors of GBV were found to be professional and eager to assist, although they raised a concern that the TCC does not operate 24 hours. "We are concerned as we have been told that victims can't be assisted after hours, they can't be seen or assisted by social workers for counselling and the

NPA is not available for statement taking, this means that the victims have to be attended to the next morning", said Commissioner van der Merwe. Another challenge that the TCCs are facing is that victims and survivors of GBV are being transported by police branded vehicles and the management stated that this is because unbranded vehicles are used by private investigators and they are limited, this was viewed as a secondary victimisation by the CGE delegates. "We were made aware that victims who require other services that are not available at the TCCs after hours, arrangement are being made to visit them at their homes or given taxi fare to come back the next day for the services", said Nceba Mrwebo, CGE's provincial manager in the Eastern Cape.

Correctional Facilities Not Immune From Gender Equality Obligation

As part of its mandate to ensure that public and private entities promote and protect gender equality, the Commission For Gender Equality has embarked on a monitoring tour of correctional centres and police stations across the country to assess how well the Department of Correctional Services is maintaining gender transformation and empowerment in its facilities.

This week Commissioner Prabashni Subrayan-Naidoo visited the Durban Westville Female Correction Centre and the Inanda Police Station to meet their management and receive briefings on the state of gender equality in their respective operations. "This visit is important because Inanda SAPS has consistently been reported by the Minister of Police as a hotspot for gender-based violence and femicide," said Commissioner Subrayan-Naidoo. Police stations are expected to have procedures in place to assist GBV complainants, such as trained officers, victim-friendly rooms, DNA test kits and general



Compliance with the five-point plan. Commissioner Naidoo has also paid monitoring visits to the courts to assess how the justice system administers GBV related matters. The Commissioner has visited other correctional facilities in the Free State and North West province.

INTRODUCING

The Commission for Gender Equality's own TV Talk Show focusing on national gender issues in Mzansi. Starting 05 October @ 18:00.

DUMISA

DStv Channel 340



SET YOUR REMINDERS. CGE's TV Talk Show – Gender Space – will premiere on 05 October 2023 at 18:00 and continue to air every Thursday same time for twelve weeks, ending on 21 December. Tune in to listen to CGE Commissioners and officials educating the public on the Commission's mandate and gender-equality programmes. All of this on DSTV channel 340.

Watch Gender Space, every Thursday 6pm from 05 Oct – 21 Dec on DSTV channel 340, to hear more about the CGE.