



Progress Report on the Implementation of the 2018 NEAPACOH
COMMITMENTS
NETWORK OF AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES OF
HEALTH (NEAPACOH) MEETING
October 31, 2019

Country : Zimbabwe

Presented By Hon. MAHLANGU SICHELESILE

Commitments made in October 2018 by the Zimbabwe Parliamentary Committee on Health and Child Care

- Continue to lobby for the progressive realisation of the 15% Abuja Declaration;
- Continue to lobby for comprehensive access to Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR)/Family Planning (FP) services;
- Lobby for the review of the Termination of Pregnancy Act;
- Establish the Zimbabwe Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development; and
- Tracking the operationalisation of the Demographic Dividend Report for Zimbabwe

Progress

Commitment:

1) Continue to lobby for the progressive realization of the 15% Abuja Declaration

Overall Implementation Status

Specific Activity/Action

Progress towards achieving Commitment

Challenges

Lessons Learned/Commends

-The Committee presented a pre- budget report to the Minister of Finance and Economic Development during the 2019 Pre-Budget Seminar.

-The Committee also held a post-budget analysis meeting with the stakeholders and the MoHCC and presented a report in the National Assembly during budget debate.

After Members of the Committee with the support from other Members of Parliament exerted much pressure on to the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, the Health budget was raised from US\$520 million in 2018 to US\$695 million, translating to 8.9% of the 2019 national budget.

Limited fiscal space with many competing national demands.

Inflationary environment that impacted negatively on service delivery.

Continuous and rigorous persuasion for the allocation of 15% of the national budget to the Ministry of Health and Child Care is key for the achievement of the progressive realisation of the Abuja Declaration.

Progress

Commitment:

1) Continue to lobby for the progressive realization of the 15% Abuja Declaration Continued...

Overall Implementation Status			
Specific Activity/Action	Progress towards achieving Commitment	Challenges	Lessons Learned/Commends
<p>The Committee managed to galvanise support from other Members of Parliament to push for the increase of the 2019 budget allocation.</p>	<p>After Members of the Committee with the support from other Members of Parliament exerted much pressure on to the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, the Health budget was raised from US\$520 million in 2018 to US\$695 million, translating to 8.9% of the 2019 national budget.</p>	<p>As mentioned above</p>	<p>As mentioned above</p>

Progress

Commitment:

2) Continue to lobby for comprehensive access to ASRHR/FP services Continued...

Overall Implementation Status			
Specific Activity/Action	Progress towards achieving Commitment	Challenges	Lessons Learned/Commends
<p>The Committee also raised concern over lack of access to SRH care and services by adolescents and proposed that the Age of Consent to access SRH care and services be reviewed downwards in order to increase access by young people.</p>	<p>The Committee engaged the Minister of Health and Child Care over the matter and the Minister indicated his willingness to consider the access to SRH care and services by adolescents and young people through wider consultations. He added that these issues can be discussed when reviewing the Health Services Act</p>	<p>Conflicting legislation:-The Age of Consent to sexual intercourse in Zimbabwe is 16 years while the Age of consent to marriage is 18 years. Plans are in place to align the two pieces of legislation to raise the Age of Consent to Sexual Intercourse to 18 years.</p>	<p>There is greater need to sensitise the public through public education programmes on issues of Age of Consent, Sexual Intercourse with Young Persons and access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Care and Services in Zimbabwe.</p>

Progress

Commitment:

2) Continue to lobby for comprehensive access to ASRHR/FP services Continued...

Overall Implementation Status			
Specific Activity/Action	Progress towards achieving Commitment	Challenges	Lessons Learned/Commends
<p>This proposal was misconstrued or misunderstood and sparked strong debate from the public space as people understood it to mean that the Committee was proposing to review downwards the Age of Consent to Sexual Intercourse.</p>	<p>As mentioned above</p>	<p>Currently, there is no legislation that specifies the age limit below which parental consent is required to receive SRH services in general. Because a child under the age of 16 years cannot consent to sexual intercourse at law, it is then presumed that a child does not need contraceptives or other SRH services</p>	<p>Existing policies need clarification or review to ensure SRHR/Family Planning services are provided to adolescents in need of such.</p>

Progress

Commitment:

2) Continue to lobby for comprehensive access to ASRHR/FP services Continued...

Overall Implementation Status			
Specific Activity/Action	Progress towards achieving Commitment	Challenges	Lessons Learned/commends
<p>Consequently, the Committee had to respond to a letter of complaint from a citizen by way of giving her the opportunity to appear before the Committee and have the issue clarified. The citizen was convinced by the Committee's Clarifications.</p>	<p>The Committee engaged the Minister of Health and Child Care over the matter and the Minister indicated his willingness to consider the access to SRH care and services by adolescents and young people through wider consultations. He added that these issues can be discussed when reviewing the Health Services Act.</p>	<p>As mentioned above</p>	<p>As mentioned above</p>

Progress

Commitment:

3) Lobby for the review of the Termination of Pregnancy Act

Overall Implementation Status

Specific Activity/Action

Progress towards achieving Commitment

Challenges

Lessons Learned/Commends

Following sensitisation of MPs by the CSOs, the Committee engaged the Minister of Health and Child Care over the possibility of reviewing the current Termination of Pregnancy Act in order to broaden the justifications for safe abortions. The Minister received the submission with a positive mind and indicated that the matter required wider

Debate or discussions on the review of the current Termination of Pregnancy Act have began although a lot still needs to be done in order to break the silence.

The subject is considered taboo to discuss in public domain due to traditional and religious beliefs.
-In Zimbabwe, 4 out of 10 pregnancies are unintended or unplanned; and 25% of those unintended pregnancies end in abortions. In 2016 alone, more than 65, 000 induced unsafe abortions occurred in Zimbabwe.

Even though the topic of abortion may seem taboo in Zimbabwe, it is a conversation we need to have because this silence is killing our women and girls.

Progress

Commitment:

3) Lobby for the review of the Termination of Pregnancy Act Continued...

Overall Implementation Status			
Specific Activity/Action	Progress towards achieving Commitment	Challenges	Lessons Learned/Commends
<p>In April 2019, the Committee also conducted Community Dialogues on Termination of Pregnancy Act with the support of Right Here Right Now Consortium. These were conducted in Mapanzure Rural (Masvingo) and Chiredzi areas.</p>	<p>The dialogues created a platform for open discussions on the issue of safe abortions at community level. This enabled MPs to gather primary evidence on the magnitude of the challenges being experienced by the people in the communities in relation to this matter. This also led to the debate on the matter in the National Assembly during the tabling of the ICPD report of Ottawa and Rwanda Conferences.</p>	<p>As mentioned above</p>	<p>As mentioned above</p>

Progress

Commitment:

3) Lobby for the review of the Termination of Pregnancy Act Continued...

Overall Implementation Status			
Specific Activity/Action	Progress towards achieving Commitment	Challenges	Lessons Learned/Commends
As above	Furthermore, during the PAN-African High-Level Summit on HIV and Health Financing held in July 2019, in Congo Brazaville, the President of the Senate House encouraged MPs to start conversation on such issues. This was a result of debate that took place in the National Assembly.	As mentioned above	As mentioned above

Progress

Commitment:

4) Establish the Zimbabwe Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development

Overall Implementation Status			
Specific Activity/Action	Progress towards achieving Commitment	Challenges	Lessons Learned/Commends
<p>The report on the 2018 NEAPACOH Conference was presented before the Committee and a recommendation to establish the Zimbabwe Parliamentary Forum on Population (ZPFPD) and Development was made in the report. The report was adopted by the Committee for tabling in the National Assembly.</p>	<p>Following the presentation of the 2018 NEAPACOH report and the Ottawa and Rwanda ICPD reports, most of the Committee Members had a better understanding of topical issues on SRH/FP. This made it easy to get a buy-in from all Committee Members to formulate the ZPFPD which is yet to be launched.</p>	<p>Although it is generally agreed that SRH/FP issues need to be attended to, there still remains some issues considered as taboo to talk about (safe abortion, age of consent to access SRH/FP services) mainly due to lack of adequate and necessary information and knowledge.</p>	<p>Continuous capacity building for MPs on emerging issues on SRH/FP is vital as this equips them with the necessary and latest information and knowledge which they can use when pushing for reforms in such areas.</p>

Progress

Commitment:

5) Tracking the operationalisation of the Demographic Dividend Report for Zimbabwe

Overall Implementation Status			
Specific Activity/Action	Progress towards achieving Commitment	Challenges	Lessons Learned/Commends
<p>Plans were made between the Committee and the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council to hold a sensitization workshop to unpack the Demographic Dividend Report to Members of Parliament in the third quarter of the year. However, due to the busy schedule of Parliament, the workshop did not take place as planned.</p>	<p>Since the third quarter of 2019 has elapsed, efforts are being made to hold the sensitization workshop before year end or in the first quarter of 2020.</p>	<p>-Members of the Committee lack appreciation of issues contained in the Demographic Dividend Report for Zimbabwe, hence, carrying out oversight function the operationalization of such a report becomes difficult. -The busy sitting calendar of Parliament made it difficult to conduct the much needed sensitization workshop</p>	<p>Oversight function or monitoring of implantation of government programmes and activity is only possible and meaningful if Members know what they are tracking.</p>

2019-2020 Commitments

- 1) Continue to lobby for the progressive realization of the 15% Abuja Declaration;
- 2) Continue to lobby for comprehensive access to ASRHR/FP services;
- 3) Continue to lobby for the review of the Termination of Pregnancy Act: Breaking the Silence;
- 4) Establish the Zimbabwe Parliamentary Caucus on Population and Development; and
- 5) Track the operationalization of the Demographic Dividend Report for Zimbabwe.