



Progress Report on the Implementation of the 2019 NEAPACOH
COMMITMENTS
NETWORK OF AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES OF
HEALTH (NEAPACOH) MEETING
October 29, 2020

Country : Zimbabwe

Presented By Hon. ZHOU PESERVANCE

Commitments made in October 2019 by the Zimbabwe Parliamentary Committee on Health and Child Care

1. Continue to lobby for the progressive realisation of the 15% Abuja Declaration;
2. Continue to lobby for comprehensive access to Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR)/Family Planning (FP) services;
3. Lobby for the review of the Termination of Pregnancy Act;
4. Establish the Zimbabwe Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development; and
5. 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 8.9% of the 2019 national budget to 10% in 2020.

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:

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

Overall Implementation Status			
Specific Activity/Action	Progress towards achieving Commitment	Challenges	Lessons Learned/Commends
<p>The Committee, with the support of key stakeholders like NAC, UN Family, Right Here Right Now and Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council, continued to conduct sensitization and advocacy meetings on ASHR/FP. The main thrust of these meetings was on the lack of access to SRH care and services by adolescents and</p>	<p>The continuous engagements with key stakeholders culminated into a petition that was submitted to Parliament in March 2020 by the Advocacy Core Team (ACT). The petition requested Parliament to consider comprehensive amendments to laws in order to provide for age of consent to accessing reproductive healthcare services by adolescents and</p>	<p>The Covid-19 induced lockdown resulted in the delayed enquiry on the petition.</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>When Covid-19 restrictions were relaxed for some essential services, the Committee resumed its business by inviting the petitioners, the Advocacy Core Team, to unpack the petition to the Committee joint Portfolio Committee on Health and Child Care and Thematic Committee on HIV and AIDS.</p>	<p>More Members of the two Committees had a better understanding of ASRH/FP Issues and began to appreciate the gaps that exist in the current pieces of legislations with regards to the access of SRH services by adolescents and young persons.</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:

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
<p>Continuous engagements with the key stakeholders to map out the best approach to reviewing the current Termination of Pregnancy Act in order to break the silence on the subject matter. The continuous engagements were also aimed at identifying champions for this cause.</p> <p>Traditional Leaders e.g Chiefs have also been</p>	<p>To date, all the key stakeholders have agreed on the administrative issues that need to be addressed in the ToP. However, they are yet to find a common agreement as to whether the current ToP should be amended by broadening the grounds on which safe abortion is permissible or to repeal it and draft a new law.</p> <p>There has also been a buy-in</p>	<p>The subject is considered taboo to discuss in public domain due to traditional and religious beliefs.</p> <p>-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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

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>In February 2020, Hon. Dr. Labode and Hon. Kwaramba tabled the Ottawa and Rwanda ICPD report. This was meant to put SRHR/FP issues on the political agenda and stimulate debate in the House and ultimately establish champions for this cause.</p>	<p>Following the tabling of the report on Ottawa and Rwanda ICPD Conferences, an Interim Executive Committee was set up and consists of 15 Members and secretariat. The Committee was set up in order to plan the launch of the ZPFPD and SRHR. In terms of support, the UNFPA has indicated its interest in the establishment of the forum.</p>	<p>The covid-19 induced lockdown has resulted in the delay of the launch of the forum.</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 Covid-19 induced lockdown affected the implementation of this activity, efforts are being made to hold the sensitization workshop before mid-year 2021.</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>

2020-2021 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.