



women, youth &  
persons with disabilities

Department:  
Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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**Speaking Notes on Virtual Round Table Discussion Theme:  
“Gender Based Violence and Femicide in Youth in Relation To  
Covid-19”**

**By**

**Deputy Minister Prof Hlengiwe Mkhize**

**Date: 08 August 2020**

Panellists: Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation  
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Our dialogue today takes place amidst a devastating outbreak of COVID-19, of which its impact will be felt over a long period of time – particularly by women, youth, persons with disabilities and the LGBTQIA+ community, as they continue to be the most disadvantaged in our society.

This pandemic has laid bare the deep rooted fault lines of inequality that are entrenched in our society – not just from 1994.

Inequalities, discrimination, prejudice, bigotry, sexism and homophobia have a long history, which manifest itself in patriarchal, toxic and harmful practices and negatively impact the most vulnerable sectors of our society.

Because of mass media vigilance, GBVF strike not only the victim and the immediate family but the society at large.

in the context of the given theme in this dialogue, institutions like colleges or universities should be thinking about the extent of secondary trauma .The shock waves run throughout’ the whole organisation. The public outcry and the media attention sometimes not so sensitive, leave a young person extremely agitated nervous, fearful, and anxious, with a loss of memory and difficulty in falling asleep. In some instances young people develop anxiety and depression and even suicidal thoughts.

On leaving home many of our young people would already have been exposed to multi forms of violation, so new forms of victimisation away from home triggers re traumatisation unfortunately at the time when they are on their own.

Young women of South Africa have said enough is enough, they have called for interventions with greater impact. The PSET GBV policy framework to curb and manage cases of GBVF is welcomed. It is a timely response to the scourge. We thank the Minister and Deputy Minister of Higher Education Science and Innovation for an

astute leadership role. We acknowledge the alignment with the National Strategic Plan, which was received in May 2020 and presented to the public by our president, His Excellency, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa. The NSP”” has the following aligned pillars:

The pillars are:

**1) Accountability, Coordination and Leadership** - Firm leadership and strengthened accountability that responds to the Gender-Based Violence and Femicide crisis in a multi-sectoral, strategically and institutionally coherent and resourced way.

**2) Prevention and rebuilding social cohesion** – stopping violence before it happens and a national drive towards shifting away from toxic masculinities, restoring human dignity and rebuilding the social fabric.

**3) Justice safety and protection** – ensuring that all Gender-Based Violence survivors are able to access efficient and sensitive criminal justice.

**4) Response, care, support and healing** – Strengthening of existing response, care and support services by the state and civil society in ways that are victim-centred, survivor-focused to facilitate recovery and healing.

**5) Economic power** – Addressing women’s unequal economic and social position, through access to government and private sector procurement, employment, housing, access to land, financial resources and income other generating initiatives.

**6) Research and information management** – availability of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide information across different government management information systems to address systemic challenges and facilitate effective solutions and responses

Minister Cele reported that in the year 2019/2020, the sexual offences stats stands at 53 293- up 1.7% from last year’s stats that already unacceptably stood at 52 420. What is important today is to guarantee women an accelerated conviction rate and improved capacity to investigate cases so that they get heard into our courts.

During the lockdown which started on March 26, a number of despicable and senseless murders happened.

Indeed women are facing a double pandemic, emanating from the fear of COVID 19, experiencing anxiety about the number of deaths and in some instances struggling with personal loss and grief .GBVF becomes an extra burden for women.

Once we are victim -centred mental health issues feature strongly whether we are thinking about prevention programs or interventions within the criminal justice system. Victims bear a burden of memory and they suffer from immense pain, memory gaps, denials and deliberate avoidance of reliving the experience.

Participation of young male students in GBVF dialogues will enrich the implementation of the PSET GBV policy framework on the scourge. We are looking forward to a transformation value of the policy, hopefully increased funding of mental health programs on campus, improved infrastructure build, re-examination of modes of transport especially for those who are residing off campus.

The United Nations emphasises the importance of promotion and prevention. They advise that mental health promotion and prevention interventions should aim to strengthen individuals' capacity to regulate emotions, enhance alternatives to risk-taking behaviours, build resilience into difficult situations and adversities, and promote supportive social environments and social networks.

They further recommend that such programs require a multilevel approach with varied delivery platforms. It is our wish that our young people should be in the forefront when it comes to the implementation of the PSET GBV Policy Framework so as to ensure that, this generation eliminates all forms of GBVF in their lifetime.

**I THANK YOU**