



Zimbabwe MPs' journey vs Child, Early & Forced Marriages

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Collaboration & Progress & Surprises!

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Accra March 2016

Opportunities



✦ Section 78 Constitution

‘Every person over the age of 18 years has the right to found a family’

Section 81 Constitution = The right of the child- best interests of the child, age of child now 18 years vs 16 in the Children’s Act.

'obstacles'



- a. Delay in implementing the Constitution - age of marriage, Section 20 Marriage Act CAP 5:11 silence of Customary Marriages Act CAP 5:07 age of consent
- b. Semi-autonomous social fields
- c. Administrative practices- marriage registry and customary unions
- d. Party political upheavals

Surprises!



- ✦ Section 3 Domestic Violence Act 5/2006
- ✦ Defines domestic violence to include child marriage, pledging girls/women into marriage and forced marriage
- ✦ Section 4 CRIMINALIZES domestic violence . Stiff penalty
- ✦ Prosecutor General ignorant of this, 1st Lady vowed he would go.. He's going!

Getting Political Will



Bill to align law with Constitution

- ✦ Expunge all opportunity for child marriage on statute law
- ✦ Compels marriage officers to demand age proof 1st
- ✦ Tightens birth registration by reducing time allowed
- ✦ Relaxes marriage registration – traditional leaders

Court breakthrough!



- ✦ Mutopodzi & Mudzuru vs Minister of Justice, of Women & AG

Constitutional Court clarified the legal constitutional position – pushing government to act that child marriage is unconstitutional and prohibited.

Supporting motions



- ✦ Hon. Webster Maondera for gvt to research it
- ✦ Hon. Priscilla Misihairabwi's PGA's vice secretary celebration motion

PGA group formation



- ✦ Sub committee on gender & Population – chair present
- ✦ 60 signatures for online petition
- ✦ Mobilize MPs to end CEFM

- ✦ Seek support for campaign- eg copies of Girls Not Brides
MPs' tool kit
- ✦ Ultimately cause government to devise national strategy