



**Statement by the SADC Executive Secretary, H.E. Mr Elias Mpedi Magosi, on
the occasion of the 2021 Commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism Against
Gender-Based Violence Campaign**

25 November to 10 December, 2021

Theme: *Orange the World: End violence against women now!*

Once again this year, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) joins the global community in commemorating the *16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence* (GBV), the 16 Days Campaign, which begins on 25th November to 10th December every year. This campaign creates an opportunity for a collective call for the prevention and elimination of GBV, particularly violence against women and girls.

Globally, and the SADC Region in particular, incidents of violence against women and girls have risen during the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of restricted movements, social isolation measures and disruptions in access to services. This demonstrates the urgent need for GBV response and prevention strategies and mechanisms that are comprehensive and can be adapted to changing contexts to address vulnerabilities of women and girls.

This year's theme for the Campaign, *Orange the World: End violence against women now!*, calls for immediate action to end violence against women and girls. In line with the theme, I welcome the campaign by the United Nations Secretary-General, titled *UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence against Women*, calling for global action to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls.

Efforts to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls have been, and continue to be pivotal to the SADC regional integration and development agenda by addressing gender-based violence. This year's theme complements SADC's on-going efforts and commitment expressed in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development that calls for the development of strategies to prevent and eliminate all harmful social and cultural practices. The SADC Strategy and Framework of Action on Addressing GBV (2018-2030) also provides for the prevention and early identification of GBV. At strategic level, the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030 and the SADC Vision 2050 have made clear provisions and interventions for enhanced gender equality as well as women's empowerment and development, and elimination of gender-based violence.

Given the lack of consistent and sustained GBV prevention programmes and lack of reliable, timely and accessible data on GBV to inform targeted GBV programmes in the Region, as revealed by the 2018 Regional Comprehensive GBV Study, the SADC

Secretariat commits to continue to engage and build capacity of Member States to promote effective GBV prevention interventions and strategies.

As we commemorate the 16 Days Campaign this year, I call for coordinated efforts involving all stakeholders including government, civil society organisations, traditional leaders, researchers, development partners, the media and the private sector to deal with gender-based violence. It is such a coherent, multi-disciplinary, multi-level and a multi-sectoral approach that will yield greater impact, sustainable prevention of GBV, and bring about transformational change that we all aspire for.

Let us work together to create a GBV free and safe SADC region, remembering that any progress in a society is measured by how its women and girls are treated. There cannot be any meaningful social progress and development if GBV is allowed to thrive in our society.