



**Statement by the SADC Executive Secretary, H.E. Mr Elias
M. Magosi, on the occasion of the 2022 Commemoration of
the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence
Campaign**

25 November to 10 December, 2022

**Theme: *UNITE! Activism to End Violence against Women
and Girls!***

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) once again joins the international community to add its voice on a global call against Gender Based Violence (GBV) as it commemorates *16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence* Campaign which runs annually from 25th November to 10th December.

The theme for this year's 16 Days of Activism campaign, **UNITE! Activism to End Violence against Women and Girls**", presents us with a unique opportunity to increase awareness, share knowledge and take concrete actions towards preventing and eliminating this social-ill through forging a united front and strong collaboration with all actors.

At the onset, it is imperative to underscore that Gender Based Violence (GBV), particularly against women and girls, remains the most widespread and pervasive human rights violation globally and in our region. GBV poses a serious impediment to our collective efforts to achieve national and regional development goals, as it deprives women and girls, who constitute over half of the population of the SADC region, of their full potential and full participation in the region's socio-economic development. It is for this reason that SADC has placed elimination of Gender Based Violence among the key priorities as reflected in the Revised SADC Protocol on Gender and

Development, and the Regional Strategy and Framework of Action for Addressing GBV (2018-2030), which focuses on prevention and coordinated regional response to GBV.

We commemorate this year's 16 Days Campaign against the background of continued negative impact of COVID 19 pandemic, especially amongst women and girls. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, women have been forced into extreme poverty and continue to bear the burden of unpaid care and domestic work, and this thereby further drives the vulnerability of women and girls to GBV.

As we commemorate this year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence, we ought to accelerate national and regional actions to promote the leadership of women and girls and ensure their meaningful participation in political, policy-making and decision-making space, including in development and peace building processes. We must ensure that women and girls are at the table when decisions that affect them are made, so that their perspectives are taken into account. Additionally, we must continue to engage men and boys as key partners in our society, so that they can play a role in promoting gender equality and addressing Gender Based Violence.

The multi-dimensional nature of GBV requires proper coordination, forming effective networks and broad-based partnerships in order to mount an effective and formidable national and regional response to GBV. In this regard, we call for multi-sectoral, coordinated actions involving Governments, civil society, women's rights organisations, organisations working with men and boys, traditional and religious leaders, development partners, the private sector, media and academia to step up advocacy efforts and media campaigns, as well as accelerated implementation of policy frameworks to address Gender-Based Violence.

We commend the incredible contribution of civil society and women's rights organisations across the globe and in our region for leading from the front, speaking on behalf of women and girls against unacceptable practices, behaviours and acts that perpetuate gender based violence.

This year's 16 Days of Activism should serve as a reminder to all that everyone has an crucial role to play in addressing the root causes of GBV, and in ending this social malice. I am convinced that, with our collective efforts and commitment, we can set the SADC region on a sustainable path towards ending GBV and ultimately, achieve the SADC Vision 2050 of a peaceful, inclusive, competitive, middle-to-high income industrialised

region, where all citizens enjoy sustainable economic well-being, justice, and freedom.

Thank you!