

RESPONSE TO JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE (JSC) RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) thanks the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity for placing single fatherhood at the forefront of its agenda and accepts the recommendation advanced by the Committee.

Please note that the JSC Recommendations are highlighted in blue for ease of reference.

4.13. Given the challenges single fathers outlined in Table 5, the Committee recommends that the OPM, MSDFS and VWSU adjust its outreach public sensitization strategies for programmes/services to target male single parents as one of its audiences.

The Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) offers programmes for men and boys including men who may be single fathers. These programmes are currently being restructured to include the needs and challenges of single fathers. These programmes include those listed hereunder.

- **Barbershop Initiative 2018**

The Barbershop Initiative targeted males aged 14 years and older and was piloted within specific communities and schools. The programme creates a setting for male-to-male discussions about behaviours, attitudes and negative gender stereotypes. The developmental workshop component for young men covers topics ranging from violence to coping with emotions.

- **Fatherhood After Separation**

Fatherhood After Separation is a 16 week strengths-based program designed to help men adjust to the changes in family life after separation or divorce, understand and meet the needs of their children during this transition and develop an effective co-parenting relationship. The programme includes training workshops and support group meetings.

The OPM has also launched a Civil Society Working Group -Male Programmes. This Group was established to create a forum for men to disseminate/share information about existing or new initiatives targeting men and boys, single fathers, and the Single Fathers' Association. The objectives of the Civil Society Working Group include:

- To identify and promote best practices for engaging men and boys.
- To promote collective involvement/support in organizations programme implementation.
- To strengthen government civil society dialogue.

The OPM (GCA) will continue its outreach programmes on gender and development in 2019.

4.15. The Committee recommends that the MSDFS, OPM and VWSU review the recommendations proposed by the CATT in Appendix IV.

The OPM (GCA) has reviewed the recommendations proposed by CATT in Appendix IV and fully supports them. The current restructuring exercise will incorporate the recommendations proposed.

4.21. The Committee recommends that the MSDFS, OPM and VWSU review the policies which guide the distribution of their programmes and services to ensure it is equitable for male and female single parents.

The Office of the Prime Minister will closely review the policies as recommended by the Committee to ensure equity of access and gender inclusion.

4.22. The Committee recommends that the OPM commence expansion of the National Registry on Gender-based Violence to include data on all other gender related matters by December 2018 in order to inform the development of policies and the reformation of legislations.

The OPM has recognized that there is a need to broaden the present data collection which currently focuses on Domestic Violence to include all forms of gender based violence. To this end, the OPM is currently evaluating various data collection platforms which can be suitable to facilitate an upgrade of the current system. The OPM is receiving the support of iGov, the United Nation Population Fund and UN Women and on this project.

4.31. Given the unique challenges faced by single parents in comparison to a nuclear family unit, the Committee recommends that the OPM, MSDFS, and the VWSU develop programmes or revise existing programmes and services to address the unique needs of single parents.

The OPM will pursue programmes and revise existing programmes to take cognizance of the issues and challenges faced by Single Fathers.