

STATEMENT OF THE INTERFAITH STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION IN TANZANIA

Faith in Action for Gender Justice

Faith actors have a long and distinguished tradition of caring for people in need and leading people in times of great suffering. The Godly mission of our faith, both Christian and Muslims, is to offer love, support, care, education, and raise awareness to our communities. As faith actors, we are guided and called to action to defend human dignity and gender justice for all by our values and the teachings in our holy scriptures.

Related Quran verse:

“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted” (49:13).

“Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so - for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward” (33:35).

Related Bible verse:

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27).

“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8)

As we commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), we Tanzanian Faith Actors want to acknowledge the extraordinary progress made in several fields of social and economic development which have contributed to gender justice over the last 25 years. While acknowledging the progress made in these 25 years, we should again remind ourselves that development must always be people-centered. Over the past 25 years, progress in some of the key indicators have been remarkable. We therefore commend government of Tanzania and other stakeholder’s endeavors on improvement of social services. Some key achievements are highlighted hereunder:

According to Tanzania Demographic Health Survey (TDHS) report of (2016), women in Tanzania now have an average of 5.2 children compared to 6.2 children in (TDHS 1991-92); 63% of women give birth at a health facility; Primary school education is accessible to most children in Tanzania whereas the number of girls who join secondary education has increased from 20,854 in 2004 to 365,272 in 2019; The percentage of women in the parliament is now 36.4 compared to 16.4 in 1999.

Despite this remarkable progress, there is still a long way to go if Tanzania is to deliver on its national targets for SDGs 3 & 5 and meet the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) aspirations of Zero Maternal Deaths, Zero Unmet Needs for Family Planning and Zero GBV and End to Harmful Practices. Statistics indicate that the maternal mortality rate has increased from 432 to 556 deaths per 100,000 live births; 37% of girls in Tanzania are married before their 18th birthday. The adolescent birth/fertility rate is the

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number of births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19. Tanzania has the 17th highest adolescent fertility rate in Africa. The adolescent fertility rate has increased from 116 to 132 between the 2010 and 2015/16 Demographic Health Surveys (TDHS). Teenage pregnancy has also increased by 4 per cent in Tanzania since 2010; by 2016 one in four adolescents aged 15-19 had begun childbearing. Unmet need for family planning stood at 22% among married women aged 15-49 years and 23.5% among young women aged 20-24 (TDHS 2015/16). According to UNICEF (2013), Tanzania has the 11th highest absolute number of child brides in the world - 779,000. Additionally, 10% of Tanzanian women have undergone FGM and 35% of FGM is done on girls under the age of one year.

In the face of these statistics, we are called to action by our faith and we are informed by the lived experiences of our people and the evidence of remaining challenges to meet the 3 zeros.

Faith actors appeals to the international community to increase budget allocation to developing countries to support the health sector, especially for achievement of the 3 zeros; Commit national government to implement global initiatives; Invest in research and dissemination of research findings. Furthermore, through the UN work with member states in the global south to enforce and implement agreed protocols to end all forms of GBV and enhance gender equality/equity

THE AGENDA FOR TANZANIA AND FAITH ACTORS' RECOMMENDATIONS

As faith actors, we are calling for joint action by all relevant stakeholders to ensure realization of the following targets:

1. Zero Preventable Maternal Death

This is our common challenge: It is our spiritual and moral obligation to ensure that no woman or adolescent girl dies from preventable complications in pregnancy or childbirth. Together with government, all stakeholders should work to take necessary steps to ensure realization of the following: 15% budgetary allocation for the health sector in line with Abuja Protocol 2001; Increase the number of health personnel, especially for maternal and child health; Enhance Public Private Partnerships (PPP) in the health sector to fully utilize the valuable resources of faith based health facilities; Improve collaboration and cross learning among health providers, including innovations for Safer Births.

2. Zero unmet need for religiously appropriate family planning

This is our common challenge: To realize the unmet needs for religiously appropriate family planning, Faith Actors and Government must work together to incorporate sexual and reproductive health education in school curriculum, including guidelines on religiously/ and age-appropriate approaches for empowering youth on SRHR issues; Increase education and campaigns on SRHR at community level; make available family planning services and commodities available to women and girls and include the coverage of these services in the national health insurance schemes.

3. Zero gender-based violence and end to harmful traditional practices

This is our common challenge: To the realization of gender rights, there need for the allocation and disbursement of domestic resources to contribute to national targets as expressed in SDG 3 and 5, and for the full implementation of the National Plan of Action on Ending GBV. Government, faith actors and civil society organizations need to forge strong partnership to roll out the plan in local communities according to their different needs; Harmonization of conflicting legal framework aggravating GBV (especially around issues

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of child protection and child marriage); Increase awareness creation, implementation and enforcement of existing laws.

TANZANIA FAITH ACTORS COMMITMENTS

Faith actors in Tanzania therefore commit to do the following to help achieve the goals of zero preventable maternal death, zero unmet needs for family planning and zero GBV and harmful practices, so that all Tanzanians may have life in dignity

- I. Create awareness on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) to our congregations and incorporate sexual and reproductive health messages with religious scriptures while preaching.
- II. Utilize religious media platforms to disseminating messages regarding SRHR and preventing GBV.
- III. Ensure that women, girls, boys and men have access to age-appropriate information and services required to adequately protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies, early/forced marriages, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS
- IV. Create awareness on space of children and positive parenting in our churches and mosques
- V. Identify all cultural practices within our own communities, which are harmful to mothers and children and advocate for their transformation
- VI. Allocate more resources for maternal health to religious-owned hospitals and health centers



Date: November 2019

Baraza Kuu La Waislam Tanzania



Date: November 2019

Christian Council of Tanzania

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