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## STATEMENT ON THE DEROGATORY REMARKS TARGETED AT A FEMALE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

The Gender Division would like to register its disappointment at the humiliating remarks issued by Mpika Member of Parliament, Francis Kapyanga referring to Mwandi MP as looking 'constipated.'

The Division finds Mr. Kapyanga's behaviour to be unparliamentary and unprofessional, coming from a law maker as himself, who is supposed to push for laws to protect and respect women; a clear act of Gender Based Violence.

We condemn the recent instances of verbal abuse directed at female Member of Parliament which is humiliating. Such behaviour is not only disrespectful but also undermines the democratic process and hinders the progress of women in leadership positions.

Verbal abuse, whether it manifests as insults, threats, or discriminatory language, creates a hostile work environment and can discourage women from actively participating in public life. This is a form of Gender Based Violence (GBV) that must be addressed with urgency.

The Anti-Gender Based Violence Act, No. 1 of 2011 of the Laws of Zambia, provides for various forms of Gender Based Violence. Section 2 of the Act defines "abuse" as "conduct that harms or is likely to cause harm to the safety, health or well-being of a person." This definition encompasses psychological abuse, which can include emotional abuse, this involves verbal abuse, insults, humiliation, intimidation, or threats.

Additionally, the Gender Equity and Equality Act, No. 22 of 2015 of the Laws of Zambia, section 38 provides for "A person who subjects a woman to GBV, as provided under the Anti-Gender Based Violence Act, 2011, discriminates against the woman and such discrimination shall be an aggravated action as provided under that Act". In this case, the utterances made to the female Member of Parliament is a form of GBV (psychological/emotional abuse). While the Act does not explicitly define "psychological abuse," it covers a range of behaviours that could be

considered psychological abuse, such as Harassment. The Act prohibits sexual harassment and other forms of harassment, which can include verbal abuse and intimidation.

If not curbed in parliament which is a governance body responsible for legislation, the problem will not be addressed and will continue to manifest in other spheres of life. The worst is for this to manifest in the form of electoral violence, which will adversely affect the number of women participating in politics and consequently women's participation in decision making.

As an institution that advocates for the promotion of gender equity and equality we find his remarks totally unacceptable and a slap in the face of all women who are fighting so hard for their rights and representation in parliament, as well as in general leadership positions.

Such utterances are detrimental to the promotion of women participation in politics as it discourages other women from participating in politics. We strongly urge the Mpika MP to publicly render an apology to Mwandia MP.

We would like to further implore speaker of the National Assembly to take disciplinary action against this lawmaker, who has just dragged the nation backwards through his unbecoming behaviour.

The Gender Division remains resolute in promoting gender equality, a culture of respect, as well as inclusivity in all spheres of life including politics, and will not tolerate any form of GBV and sexism.

We would like to further urge other lawmakers to adopt good doctrines as they debate critical matters, and desist from dragging women down.

ENDS.

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