

INFORMATION ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN ANGOLA

Women represent 52% of the Angolan population according to the 2014 census (INE). The violation of women's human rights is a worrying structural problem in the particularly as it relates to the following;

1. Inadequate financial resources in the national budget for the social sector affecting women and girls particularly in the areas of education, sexual and reproductive health (including HIV / AIDS) and birth registration. Of particular concern are the rates of HIV/AIDS infection and adolescent pregnancy and the number of unregistered children. *Instituto Nacional de Luta contra HIV/SIDA* (2019) reports that 330,000 people are HIV positive in Angola, 190,000 of whom are women while UNICEF puts the rate of adolescent pregnancy at 191 per 1000 births (<https://data.unicef.org/topic/maternal-health/adolescent-health/>). Reproductive Rights comprise the basic right of every individual to freely and responsibly decide on the number, spacing, and opportunity to have children and to have the information and the means to make decisions free from discrimination, coercion or violence, and that men and women participate with equal responsibility in raising their children. It is recommended that the Angolan government protects and promotes: the right to life; the highest standard of health; to privacy; information and equality and non-discrimination through promoting rights based contraceptive use, ensuring quality and affordable public health services and increasing the budgetary allocation to the sector. It is also recommended that the government works towards reducing maternal and infant morbidity and mortality rate in Angola and passes a policy on the provision of sexual and reproductive rights for adolescents, in particular inclusion of comprehensive SRHR education in the school curriculum.

2. Unemployment. The 2014 census revealed an unemployment rate of 65.9% among women aged 15-64 and 53.4% among their male counterparts. An estimated 80% of unemployed women are part of the informal sector. The illiteracy level for women aged 15-24 is 33%, while 16% of men are illiterate. These indicators make it impossible for the development of women, increasing their vulnerability and trapping them in a cycle of extreme poverty. The informal sector is a sustenance refuge for more than 80% of women yet the government implemented Operation Resgate which was aimed included reducing sell of goods in undesignated places. The operation resulted in the violation of the dignity of women resulting in injuries and deaths. It is recommended that the government urges law enforcement to practice restraint and respect the dignity of women. It is also recommended that the government creates economic alternatives for the majority of women who, often due to limited educational opportunities and systemic discrimination, have failed to secure formal jobs.

3. Corporate responsibility of companies in the extractive industries and the violation of women's rights. In some locations such as Icolo and Bengo, Huila and Lunda Sul and Norte there is extraction and in some instances violation of human rights (including environmental and women's rights). Impacted populations live with soil erosion due to the exploitation of sand for construction, consumption of contaminated

water leading to sustained public health problems (dermatology, blood urine and consecutive abortions), and sexual exploitation of women and girls. The state is recommended to improve the supervision of companies, influencing corporate responsibility for the contribution of companies in the development of areas located in extractive industry zones;

4. Climate change in the southern provinces which led to a severe drought directly affects women and children resulting in transactional sex for survival. It is recommended that the Angolan state declares a state of emergency for the drought-affected region to increase relief initiatives targeted at the affected population. Tree felling in the provinces of Cuando Cubango and Moxico as deforestation has greatly contributed to climate change affecting communities, particularly women and children. Based on Law 6/17 of 24 January Forest Law, Wild Fauna and Land Conservation areas the State should promote “the defense and conservation of natural resources, guiding their exploitation and exploitation throughout the community”;

5. Education. 22% of girls aged 12 to 17 are out of school compared to 16% of their male counterparts based on the 2018 research, A Child in Angola: A Multi-dimensional analysis of Infant Poverty child by the Government of Angola, UNICEF and INE. One of the reasons is the continued existence of child marriage within our society. Article 24 of the Family Code permits marriage for girls and boys at 15 and 16 years respectively, under vaguely defined circumstances. This contradicts Article 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola where the age of majority is set at 18. We recommend that the state observes this violation of girls’ rights and gender discrimination by repealing the exception in Article 24 of the Family Code. The government should follow other examples from African countries like Mozambique and Swaziland that have aligned their laws with increased international calls for the elimination of child marriage. The government should go further and criminalize this horrendous act.

6. GBV. 31.7% of women have been victims of domestic violence in their lives. In the past month more than 5 woman have died in cases of Intimate Partner Violence. It is recommended that the Angolan government redesign the strategic plan to combat domestic violence, severely penalize offenders, as well as reinforce the implementation of the domestic violence law by improving police services, providing gender-based personalized care and providing health and social care services for victims of sexual abuse.

It is also recommended that the government reinforce gender mainstreaming in all sectors including the statistics and planning sector to ensure that the budgeting priorities are reflective of women’s needs.