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Via email: ncgbvbill@parliament.gov

Attention: Ms Ndaba

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth & Persons with Disabilities

WISE4AFRIKA & MASIMANYANE INTERNATIONAL SUBMISSION ON THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON GENDER- BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Declaration on Gender- based Violence and Femicide read together with the National Strategic Plan on Gender- based Violence (NSP) provide the rationale for the establishment of the National Council on Gender- Based Violence and Femicide.

Ending gender- based violence (GBV) and ensuring women's security should be a priority for South African government. GBV is the most extreme expression of unequal gender relations in our society, it is a violation of human rights, and a global health issue that cuts across boundaries of economic wealth, culture, religion, age and sexual orientation.

incidences of GBV and Femicide in South Africa are too many to enumerate. The prevalence and persistence of gender based violence and femicide, together with widespread impunity of perpetrators in South Africa manifest a systemic , structural problem linked to broader social, economic and political distribution of power that vest authority, decision making and belief in men.

Three decades it has taken us to fight against GBV in all its manifestations. In the three decades we have witnessed the enactment of laws and policies to end GBV and Femicide, we have witnessed efforts to increase women's participation and influence, we witnessed efforts to increase women's economic empowerment, efforts

to increase sexual and reproductive health and rights, efforts to incorporate men and boys as perpetrators, as victims and as agents of change, we have further witnessed efforts to transform norms and behaviour that underpin GBV. We have witnessed uncoordinated interventions and response to GBV, absence of a coordinating structure despite efforts to establish one, a ring- fenced GBV budget that is not subsumed into departmental budgets, we have even declared certain areas in the country as GBV hot spots.

2. SPECIFIC COMMENTS

We submit that a preamble should be developed and included in the draft bill. The preamble should and must serve as constant reminder of that violence against women is intrinsically linked to women's inequality. Inequality between women and men perpetuates, reinforces and legitimise male violence against women. It must further serve as a reminder to eradicate violence against women, addressing gross violations of women's rights as well as subtle and/ or distorted forms of men's control over women's lives, bodies and sexuality.

The preamble should be grounded in core feminist values of equality between women and men, intersectionality, diversity, peace, respect, solidarity, dignity and justice.

3. COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL

We propose an extension of Council from 13 to 17 members due to how civil society is organised and structured in this country. The extension, will address the concerns raised by organised business and organised labour. The conceptualisation of the Council was about setting up a structure that is agile , flexible and nimble- a coordinating machine . nothing more nothing less. Our contention is that the Council is not set to be a bureaucratic structure that is seized with the implementation of the NSP but rather an entity that oversees the implementation of the NSP, ensuring coordination of efforts, resources, implementation, monitoring ad evaluation.