

**Speech by Ciarán Cannon T.D., Minister of State for the Diaspora and International
Development at the Launch of Kivulini Gender Based Violence Programme
Misungwi District, Tanzania
7th October 2017**

*Honourable John Mongela - Regional Commissioner, Mwanza;
Honourable Sweda - District Commissioner of Misungwi district;
Government officials in Mwanza Region and Misungwi District;
Executive Director, staff and friends of Kivulini;
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.*

It is a great pleasure to be with you today to launch Kivulini's programme on preventing and protecting women and girls from Gender Based Violence. I am also delighted to see people here from Government, civil society, and the local community, uniting on the need to eliminate Gender Based Violence.

In the morning, I had the opportunity to see a cash transfer payment managed by TASAF and to speak with some of the beneficiaries about the very real impact that this programme is having on their lives. Ireland views social protection programmes as a key tool to ensure that the most vulnerable households in the country can benefit from Tanzania's economic growth but also contribute productively.

I wish to commend the Government of Tanzania for its commitment to this programme and to congratulate TASAF for its effective implementation. Over the past year, my officials have examined this programme closely and found that it is very effectively targeting the poorest households and that it represents good value for money. For this reason we have decided to join other partners in making our first contribution of €2.8 million (Tsh 7.4 billion) to support the programme this year.

I also visited Misasi Health centre which provides the most needed healthcare services to the communities particularly women and children. I also noted the challenges that are still facing the health facilities in Tanzania including shortage of qualified health staff and medicines. Maternal mortality remains stubbornly high.. Ireland will continue to support the

Government of Tanzania through the Health Basket Fund to deliver quality healthcare services to the poor communities.

Gender Based Violence, whether physical, sexual, emotional or economic, is recognised globally as one of the most widespread and persistent violations of the rights of women and girls. It is a universal problem; it cuts across geography, class and culture. It is certainly not unique to Tanzania. In Ireland, where I come from, domestic violence continues to be a significant challenge with 1-in-7 Irish women having experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence from their partner at some point in their lives.

In Tanzania, the most recent statistics tell us that almost 40% of women have experienced physical violence, and one in five women have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. This comes at a significant cost not just to the women concerned but to their families, their communities and to the country as a whole. Women's earnings and productivity levels are also affected, making gender-based violence a significant barrier to Tanzania's industrial growth and development.

I applaud the efforts made by the Government to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through enactment of the legal framework and strengthening of key institutions, such as police gender desks and health workers to mention a few.

The launch of the *National Plan of Action to End Violence against Women and Children*, is a clear indication of your commitment towards eliminating GBV. Ireland is committed to supporting this plan. The programme Kivulini is launching here today, in collaboration with government and with support from Ireland, strengthens the link between community level interventions to prevent violence and the national action plan.

We know that gender inequalities and GBV are directly connected. We need to work together to address the social norms and structures in society which perpetuate gender inequalities and violence. Early marriage and teenage pregnancies are a particular challenge, preventing girls from reaching their potential and exposing them to exploitation. Last week, we commemorated the International Day of the Girl Child, on the theme of "**the Power of the Adolescent Girl**". I am happy that the Tanzania Government and other stakeholders reflected

on the issues of childhood and teenage pregnancy and that commitments will be made to address this problem.

It is clear that the fight against poverty and injustice will only bear fruit if we invest in addressing the root causes of gender inequalities and GBV in our families, societies and nations. It is for this reason that, as co-facilitators of the negotiations of the Sustainable Development Goals, Ireland championed the need for a strong goal on gender equality and women's empowerment, with specific targets on harmful practices such as early or forced marriage and female genital mutilation. We will not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals if we do not achieve gender equality and ensure women and girls are prevented from violence.

Agenda 2030 is a very positive framework and Ireland is firmly committed to meeting these targets in our own country too. We stand ready to support Tanzania in translating the SDGs into national targets and in achieving results.

Ladies and gentlemen,

From our own experience, we understand that real progress in addressing gender based violence and transformation requires multidimensional commitments. I am happy to see the community initiative work done by our partner Kivulini to mobilise a critical mass to prevent women and girls from violence. I am impressed to see the involvement of such a broad range of actors in this programme. We should all remember that GBV cannot be tackled within communities without the commitment of health workers, teachers, local government, the police as well as families, parents and individuals.

The work that Kivulini does is extremely challenging and requires a long-term investment in engaging communities. This programme provides an opportunity for women, men, boys and girls to challenge their attitude and practices that cause violence.

If we are to be successful in our journey we need to see changes in attitudes in society related to masculinity. We must continue to engage men and particularly young boys in challenging ideas of what it means to be a man. Young boys need role models who challenge violence against women and who show them that such violence is a sign of weakness rather

than manliness. I would like to call upon all men in Tanzania, to be change agents and role models in the fight against GBV.

Finally let me acknowledge the work of our partner KIVULINI in addressing GBV. I know that their work has contributed a lot to the complex efforts to change attitudes and empower women in this district. The programme we are launching today will deepen this work and also enable Kivulini to scale up into other areas in Misungwi district. We are proud to be a partner to KIVULINI and a partner to Tanzania.

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