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MANDATORY AND SPECIAL SERVICES DIVISION**

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**Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality and Women's
Empowerment.**

**Status of efforts to address Gender Based Violence and Sorcery
Accusation Related Violence in the Autonomous Region of
Bougainville.**

Overview:

The Autonomous Region of Bougainville like many other provinces in Papua New Guinea and even other Pacific Island countries also has a share of its on challenges to which Gender Based Violence and Sorcery Accusation Related Violence is no exception. As a government, the mandated sits with the Autonomous Bougainville Government Department of Community Development to take a leading role in coordinating a multisectoral approach to addressing GBV and SARV. In Bougainville, we have systems and structures put in-place to harness, address and minimize issues of GBV and SARV.

Committee:

One of the systems we have is the Bougainville Family Sexual Violence Action Committee (FSVAC) which meets, reports and deliberates on such issues on a quarterly basis and also review activity programs conducted by member stakeholders and the services provided to clients, survivors and perpetrators of GBV and SARV. The Women Peace and Security Technical Working Group meets to look more into prevention, protection and empowerment of women and girls in a post conflict environment such as Bougainville.

Policy:

Bougainville has also developed an Action Plan for the UN Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security and that has been integrated into the Bougainville Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Peace and Security Policy. The same policy also has Directives and Strategies addressing Gender Based Violence and Sorcery Accusation Related Violence. This policy also calls for the establishment of the Office of Gender

Equality at the Chief Secretary's Office to which the President of the ABG is responsible of. Another of our policy is the Bougainville CSO Partnership policy which calls for a collaborative effort by all working together in common programs that benefit people.

Focal Points:

In 2000, ABG Department of Community Development conducted a gender sensitization and gender mainstreaming workshop for its 14 departments in the Bougainville Administration. Each of the departments appointed an officer each within their staff to take on the roles and responsibilities of a gender focal point and also to mainstream gender equality in their work and policy areas. To date we still work together with these Gender Focal Points (GFP) to drive the gender equality agenda in the workplace. These GFPs will be the key implementing agents of the Bougainville Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Peace and Security Policy in each of their departments in the Bougainville Public Service. GFPs had also undergone capacity development trainings on gender budgeting and gender responses in emergencies especially during the covid 19 pandemic.

Parliamentary Committee:

Department Secretaries and Members of the House of Representatives (BHOR) had an opportunity to also undergo gender sensitizing sessions to better their understanding on gender equality and equity issues. We also have a Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Gender Equality established within the Bougainville House of Representatives in the 3rd and 4th Houses. A political will is paramount in creating positive change in the mindset of our people and political leaders and bureaucrats must take ownership and lead by example.

Referral Pathway:

In the formative years of the Bougainville Family Sexual Violence Action Committee, a referral pathway was also established. Over the years we have been reviewing and refining this referral pathway to best effect the different services and programs that each member organisation does with clients, survivors and or perpetrators and families. We have been outsourcing technical and funding support to constantly support the work each partner do in the multisectoral case management referral pathway. To date we still have challenges but we meet often to address those challenges and gaps. The we have done through different sets of multi sectoral case management trainings on Child Protection(2019), Gender Based Violence(March 2023) and Sorcery Accusation Related violence(May/June 2023) being the recent trainings conducted.

Essential Services:

NO	ORGANIZATION	SERVICES
1	Community Development	Court applications for: Child maintenance, IPO, customary adoption, adultery cases Basic counselling, case mediations, case work and referrals, coordinate repatriations, make home visits, make safe placement decisions
2	Family Support Centre	Medical examination treatment and care, mental health checks, internal hospital referral, basic counselling, emergency contraceptive, vaccination, refer for medical reports
3	Family Sexual Violence Unit	Obtain statements, investigate, arrest, charge, make referrals, IPOs
4	Safe House	Safe placement, provide basic needs, case referrals, counselling, rehabilitation, livelihood skills training, re-integration, repatriations, IPO
5	Courts	Issue IPO, deal with breaches of IPO, revoke or make variations on IPO, preside over GBV/SARV cases. Issue maintenance, adultery and customary adoption orders.

Major Setback:

The major set back for Bougainville now is burning down of the ABG Community Development Office which caught fire mid-December last year 2022. We lost everything from records to equipment and materials. To date we are faced with capacity and resourcing issues to try and rebuild all that we lost in the fire. This is why I am not able to give an accurate record of all the cases we have dealt with in our line of work and that of the multisectoral referral pathway. This has literally crippled the level of service we as a mandated department can offer to our people in need.

Though a very vital service, the welfare sector has also been the least prioritized and least supported in terms of resourcing and funding. We lost all the equipment and materials supplied for GBV in the fire and that is very unfortunate.

Recommendations:

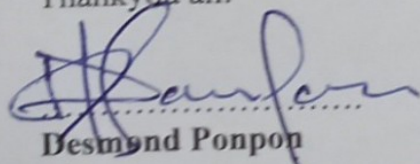
- 1) Adequate support must be given to the direct implementers of GBV and SARV case work.
- 2) Proper and certified counselling trainings be conducted for all Child Protection and GBV and SARV case workers.
- 3) Protection, safety and welfare of registered case workers.
- 4) Establish a legal clarity on all legislations dealing with violence especially within the families and homes, and relating to gender or sex differentials.
- 5) Provincial GBV budgets must be made available to the provinces as per 2021 planning meeting.
- 6) Develop contextualized GBV and SARV Strategies for each province and support strategies for the regions.

Conclusion:

This is just a summary brief of the efforts we are also doing in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville in addressing issues of Gender Based Violence and Sorcery Accusation Related Violence. I acknowledge the fact that we have a great deal to address in these issues and the need to strengthen gaps in our multi sectoral referral pathway. Amidst all these challenges, we have come up with a lot of initiatives, strategies and even policy initiatives to continue to work on the change of mindset for our people and in addressing the violence involved. More work still needs to be done around prevention and male advocacy programs so that more and more man drive these positive changes themselves.

To conclude, on behalf of the Autonomous Bougainville Government and the people of Bougainville, I take this time to again thank the Government of the sovereign state of Papua New Guinea, Donor and Development partners for the support provide to us in addressing these crippling issues. We stand committed to working together with our National and Subnational partners in ensuring that PNG and Bougainville is a safe place for all and look forward to our strengthened partnership.

Thankyou all.



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