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53rd HRC Session

Item 6 – UPR Outcomes – Zambia

Speaker: Tiana Jurisic, MPH

Oral statement submitted by
**VIDES International – International Volunteerism Organization for
Women, Education and Development**

And co-signed by
**IIMA – Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice
FMSI – Marist Foundation for International Solidarity
APG23 – Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII**

With support of
**Salesian Sisters of Zambia
Marist Brothers of Zambia**

Thank you, Mr President.

VIDES International, on behalf of this NGO coalition, welcomes Zambia's participation in the Universal Periodic Review.

We commend Zambia's acceptance of UPR recommendations n. 127.136 and 138¹ to improve **access to free quality education** as well as efforts to fully implement relevant domestic legislation.

We remain particularly concerned about the lack of educational opportunities for **rural children** and the negative impact **child labour** and **early marriage** have on education. We note Zambia's acceptance of recommendations n. 127.144 and 146² which focus on improving girls' education in rural areas.

¹ Recommendation 127.136 Continue to pursue measures in the direction of providing inclusive and accessible education to all, especially children in rural areas (Mauritius); 127.138 Increase financing to education and access to teacher training, in order to improve the quality of education and learning outcomes, and thereby complement the commendable introduction of free education up to grade 12 (Finland).

² Recommendation 127.144 Promote the participation of girls in all levels of education, especially in rural areas, including by making schools more accessible and ensuring that schools are a safe space for girls (Latvia); 127.146 Take additional measures to fight against dropping out of school, especially by young girls, particularly in rural areas, and promote strategies for reintegration into the school system (Djibouti).

We welcome the acceptance of recommendations n. 127.170, 173 and 174³ by Zambia and reiterate our concern on child marriages. UNICEF estimates there are 1.7 million child brides, with 400,000 married before the age of 15 in Zambia⁴. Unfortunately, the weak coordination has diluted the potential impact of interventions addressing child marriage.

We welcome the acceptance of recommendations n. 127.111 and 171⁵ and the development of the *National Action Plan (NAP) for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour (2020-2025)*. The response has not been sufficient, since child labour remains widespread, especially in rural areas such as the Sinda District.

(In accordance with relevant UPR recommendations,) this NGO coalition calls on Zambia to:

- 1. Increase state funding for educational facilities and teacher training to ensure that children and youth in rural areas, especially girls, have equal access to quality education;**
- 2. Implement follow up measures on the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage with a unified response;**
- 3. Sensitize communities to eradicate child labour in collaboration with civil society.**

Thank you.

³ Recommendation 127.170 Harmonize all the laws relating to children, including the development of a successor strategy regarding behavioural change towards child marriage (Bahamas); 127.173 Assess the impact of the national strategy on ending child marriage in Zambia, 2016–2021, and undertake follow-up measures and increase its efforts to address the root causes of early marriage and to maintain girls in the education system (South Africa); 127.174 Renew the national strategy to end child marriage for the period 2023–2026 and provide sufficient funding and human and technical resources for its systematic and comprehensive implementation (Burkina Faso).

⁴ www.unicef.org/zambia/ UNFPA-UNICEF GLOBAL PROGRAMME TO END CHILD MARRIAGE (retrieved 19th June 2022)

⁵ Recommendation 127.111 Take urgent measures to investigate, punish and prevent the commercial exploitation and trafficking of children, strengthen the training of professionals who are responsible for identifying and referring child victims of trafficking and ensure effective referral and support services for child victims of sale and trafficking (Argentina); 127.171 Continue addressing all incidences of child labour and define, prohibit and eliminate hazardous labour practice for child workers (Croatia).