

Regional Dialogues Seek Men as Partners in the Fight Against Gender Based Violence

Mbabane, 22 May 2007 – The public is encouraged to attend and participate in one of the upcoming regional dialogues on gender based violence.

Building on the 8 March celebration of International Women's Day, these regional dialogues seek to create public forums to discuss ending impunity against women and children.

The dialogues will feature a drama by Siphila Nje Drama Group that should spark discussions among participants. The multisectoral coordinating team behind the dialogues encourages both men and women to attend the events. Rather than creating discussions that position men as the perpetrators of violence, the team wishes to reach out to men as partners in the discussions. To help achieve this goal, each of the dialogues will be facilitated by a male expert in the field of gender based violence.

Each of the dialogues will begin at 10 a.m. The dates and locations of the dialogues are:

- Lubombo region: Wednesday, 23 May at Siteki Park in Siteki
- Manzini region: Thursday, 24 May at Mafutseni area
- Hhohho region: Friday, 25 May at Gobolondvo Hall in the Piggs Peak area
- Shiselweni region: Tuesday, 29 May at Mbangweni Shiselweni II

Government, NGO, CBO, and FBO partners that comprised the coordinating team hope the regional discussions will not only raise awareness on gender based violence issues but will also educate the public on how the justice system currently deals with these issues. Public discourse can create advocacy for law reform and assist in lighting the way forward for communities and the nation to put an end to gender based violence.

The coordinating team hopes to continue the dialogues by bringing them down to constituency level and linking them to the national campaign against gender based violence that was launched on 13 April. The campaign will run throughout the year and could be linked to the suggestions and recommendations that arise from the regional and community dialogues.