

Opening Address

Launching workshop for the Development of a
Gender Based Violence Working Together Manual
Friday 4th November, 2011 at ICCS, Room 2

Minister

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

We have gathered here today to work together to address the growing and escalating problem of Gender Based Violence in Seychelles. We have spoken long and hard, about domestic violence and child abuse in our small island home. Through the many years we have implemented numerous different activities, developed comprehensive strategies and plans of action; but Gender Based Violence in all its forms continues to confound us. Our ability to grapple with the white elephant in the room, has led many to simply turn a blind eye or to give up in cynical defeat.

More and more, individuals live in this world as separate and isolate beings from their neighbours, family and friends. We are too busy going about our daily lives, consumed by our immediate environment, that we forget that we are part of something so much more bigger. To lose that connection, that innate link we have to each other, is to lose our humanity.

The world was recently shocked when passersby turned a blind eye to a small child left dying in the road after a hit and run in China. This was a crime we all recognised, not just on the part of the drivers, but a crime committed by each and every person who stood by and did nothing. But ladies and gentlemen, when we turn a blind eye to a neighbour being beaten by her drunk husband, a small child being abused by a frustrated mother, a person living with a mental

disability being taken advantage of sexually, or a girl coerced to sell her body on the street for money... is this not also a crime and a wakeup call before our very humanity is corroded away as well?

Msye, madanm nou pe termin en lannen kin ganny marke par bokou levenman enportan tel ki zwe dezil 2011. Dan tou kwen, zenn koman vye ti manifeste en sel ferver e sant en sel refren, laviktwtar pour Sesel.

Wi nou ti fer li akoz nou konviksyon, en konvisyon profon ki ti filtre dan nou lavenn, dan nou lakour e nou pei e fer nou viv en linite entans.

Aprè zwe dezil kot tou in trankil nou pei in anbank lo en lot parkour atraver sa seri dyalog lo Renesans Sosyal. Nou pei pe demann nou pou tret bann sitiasyon sosyal kipe menas nou progre avek menm konviksyon, menm senserite pour nou ganny sa meday pli enportan ki nou tou nou anvi; sa meday i nou bann valer e virti ki brille atraver konportman saken nou bann zanfan, zenn e adilt. An dot mo sa nouvo Sesel kot progre sosyal i marye byen avek progre ekonomik e nou tou nou en ganyan.

Topik nou latelye travay ozordi i en ki koz bokou soufrans, kit son viktim avek bokou sikatris sikolozik e fizik. Kekstyon ki nou souvan demande I akoz vyolans i kontinyen rong nou sosyete? Kisa kin pous sa dimoun pou fer li? ki nou fer pour sa vikim e kote I ale pou rod led? Eksetera....

We are all here present today, as concerned individuals and responsible representatives of our various organisations. I am sure each and everyone of us in this room has helped and supported at least one survivor of Gender Based Violence in one way or another. However, our personal intent and will to help, is not always matched by our professional capacity. Without clear guidelines and procedures, the best practice of some, cannot be shared by the many. These difficult and complex cases, require more than just good intention. Skill, understanding and an integrated response is

paramount, to ensure each and every case is dealt with professionally, sensitively and holistically. This lack of know how and perceived lack of power to change the situation, breeds cynicism, despondency, hopelessness and the acceptance of the inhumane in our daily lives.

Your presence here today, is like a small piece of the puzzle to a brighter future in the way we respond to cases of Gender Based Violence. You may hold in your mind one or many best practices that we can piece together to develop our Working Together Manual.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are on the brink of a new year, a new era and a new hope. If what we begin to mould today can be used as a minimum set of standards to help guide professionals in the future to deal more effectively and sensitively to survivors of Gender Based Violence, then we would have managed to multiple our good intentions and knowledge. We will need to work together to turn the tide of destruction that has begun to wash over our nation. If we do not work SMART, then all our good intentions, know how and capacity will go to waste. We will need to pull together every strength available to be able to reach the target set out in the SADC Gender and Development Protocol to half levels of GBV by 2015. This will be no small feat. But let us not be disheartened by the task in front of us. Let us walk into our new future, in hope that we can achieve our vision of a future free from violence and inequality.

I have confidence and faith that we can achieve our targets and start this new era on a more optimistic note. As partners we can agree on common grounds and strengthen our resolve to turn our weaknesses into strength to win more medals for Seychelles. I wish you productive deliberations and officially declare this launching workshop open.

I thank you.