

STATEMENT

UPR Pre-session in Namibia

Windhoek, 3 February 2026

Delivered by: YFEM NAMIBIA TRUST

1. Presentation of the organization

This statement is delivered on behalf of Young Feminists Movement Namibia (Y-Fem Namibia Trust), a women's human rights NGO Dedicated to promoting and advancing the human rights of women in all their diversity. Y-Fem has participated in the UPR processes at national level since 2023. Consultations were conducted with civil society organizations including Y-Fem with its partners, networks and members in the development of the submission and participated in the consultations.

The submission focuses on Gender-Based Violence ,Harmful, traditional cultural practices. (3) SRHR and CSE (comprehensive sexuality education)

Issue 1 Gender based violence and gender equality

A. A follow- up on the first review

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is a critical issue that disproportionately affects women and girls, as well as sexual and gender minorities. Policies aimed at addressing gender equality should be culturally sensitive and take into account the diverse experiences of women from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Strengths of Namibia

Namibia has established a strong legal foundation for addressing SGBV, particularly through the Combating of Rape Act and the Combating of Domestic Violence Act.

Gender-based violence prevention and awareness-raising efforts include publicly stated commitments by the GRN, the development and adoption of relevant policies, and the active implementation of campaigns aimed at empowering women, countering harmful cultural practices, and ending GBV.

However, Namibia remains a patriarchal society in which discriminatory gender stereotypes and harmful practices persist. Gender inequalities perpetuate harmful socio-cultural norms increasing women's vulnerability to abuse. Violence against women is one of the greatest human rights challenges faced by women in Namibia. GBV is a significant public health issue as it has profound implications on the physical, mental and reproductive health of GBV survivors and their families.

There is significant gaps persist not only in the legal and policy framework, Persistent challenges include access to protection orders, robust data collection, and the

availability of adequate shelters and institutional support. LGBTI partners remain excluded from legal protection from domestic violence; there is limited protective spaces for survivors of gender-based violence; and GBV data collection and coordination remain fragmented and insufficient. National GBV Baseline Study of 2017 indicated that the main drivers of GBV in Namibia include unequal power relations, poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, and negative cultural practices such as child marriage'

According to The Namibian Police Force recorded 4 814 gender-based violence (GBV) cases countrywide during the 2023/24 financial year. Namibia recorded 4 405 cases of gender-based violence (GBV) between April 2024 and February 2025, with 1 345 of those being rape cases.

Women and girls representing the vast majority of victims. These violations have profound impacts on the physical and mental health of survivors, their social and economic well-being, and their fundamental human rights, including the right to security, dignity, and equality.

Recommendation

- Create a centralised national data system to collect, disaggregate, and analyse GBV-related information from all key stakeholders and Mandate and fund comprehensive, ongoing, specialised training for all police officers, social workers, and other first responders on how to handle GBV cases and Simplify and streamline the process for obtaining protection orders
- Use court report/order system to institute compulsory attendance at rehabilitative counselling or training for those who have been served with protection orders and Strengthen mental health services and psychosocial safety nets for survivors, case workers, first responders and perpetrators. Harmful, traditional cultural practices.
- Enact a hate crimes law which addresses crimes motivated by an individual's sexual orientation and gender identity, ensure support services are available to assist LGBT victims, and enact legislation explicitly prohibiting discrimination based on SOGIE.

Issue 2 Child marriage

Child marriage is a critical issue that disproportionately affects girls and has far-reaching consequences for gender equality, education, health, and economic development. Namibia committed to a National Violence Against Children campaign will be designed and implemented to enhance awareness and change harmful attitudes and practices related to violence. Cultural beliefs and contradictory laws continue to pose significant barriers to efforts aimed at ending child marriage, such as access to sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR)

More needs to be done to address harmful cultural practices. The Child Care and Protection Act laudably sets the legal age of marriage at 18 years; however, implementation continues to face challenges. The 2013 Demographic and Health Survey found that almost 2% of women who were between the ages of 20 and 49 at the time of the survey married at age 15 (this equals about 17 women out of the 1,906 women who were questioned).

In addition, other harmful cultural practices remain largely unaddressed due to inadequate enforcement of existing laws and the lack of comprehensive, official documentation and recognition of these practices.

A. Follow up to the first review

Accordingly, to Girls not Brides every year, 12 million girls are married or in unions worldwide with an estimated 640 million girls and women alive today who were married as children. Child Marriage remains a critical problem in Southern Africa with almost 40% of girls being married before 18. According to a joint statement Ending Child Marriage in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The Child Care and Protection Act sets the legal age of marriage at 18 years; however, implementation continues to face challenges as harmful cultural practices remain largely unaddressed due to inadequate enforcement of existing laws.

New development since the last review

B. Recommendation

- Amend existing legislation or enact new laws to explicitly criminalise all forms of harmful traditional practices to cover other practices such as sexual initiation rites.
- Develop a comprehensive national strategy such as investment in girls' education In collaboration with civil society and traditional leaders, undertake a comprehensive, national harmful traditional practices study and dev. national action plan community-based interventions to promote gender equality

I. SRHR and CSE (comprehensive sexuality education)

Follow-up to the first review

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) are fundamental to gender equality and women's empowerment. Namibia has made significant strides in developing policies and legal frameworks to address SRHR issues.

Key policies and laws include:

- The National Policy on Sexual, Reproductive and Child Health takes a comprehensive approach, addressing various aspects of SRHR including

maternal health, family planning, strong focus on HIV prevention and treatment in SRHR policies as HIV/AIDS and that increasingly recognized the importance of addressing adolescent SRHR needs

However, Access to sexual and reproductive health services remains constrained, with abortion continuing to be significantly restricted. In addition, although a comprehensive sexuality education framework has been developed, it has not been effectively implemented in schools, in part due to inadequate teacher training. Women and girls lack access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services

B. New development

Implementation of Life Skills curriculum aimed at providing comprehensive sexuality education to students including Commitment to achieving universal health coverage and Gender-Specific Health Issues Focus on community- based health care. In 2020, calls for legalising abortion in Namibia intensified, A petition to amend the law to increase access to legal abortion in Namibia has attracted over 60000 signatures

C. Recommendations

- improved access to family planning measures for girls and women of all ages
- Implement Life Skills curriculum with IEC materials and provide training to teachers.
- Amend the Abortion and Sterilization Act 2 of 1975, develop service protocols and training guidelines in accordance with the Maputo Protocol and WHO best practices.