

## **Human Rights Council – 37<sup>th</sup> Session**

### **Item#: Universal Periodic Review Outcomes:**

#### **Zambia Statement by the Zambian Platform on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights**

Thank you Mr. President.

RFSU delivers this statement on behalf of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), the Centre for Reproductive Health and Education (CRHE) and the Zambian Platform on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, integrated by '23 local NGOs.

During the interactive dialogue, Zambia stated its commitment to upholding the principles of the UPR mechanism as well as to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights in the implementation of the outcome of the UPR. We wish to acknowledge the great strides the State has made in domesticating some international instruments, notably CEDAW and Maputo Protocol through the enactment of the Gender Equity and Equality Act. We also wish to note the State's acknowledgment for the first time in its report of the high maternal mortality and the State's failure to achieve the relevant MDG target by end of 2015 as a token of its good will to take the necessary steps to achieve the sustainable development goals as envisaged by the 2030 Agenda.

However, we wish to express our concern with the high number of noted recommendations (111) of the 203 recommendations received by the State, which runs counter to the spirit and purpose of the UPR process. Furthermore, we will like to underscore that while the State has committed to curbing the high rates of maternal mortality, Zambia's acceptance of the recommendation to limit abortion provision are in contravention of its obligations under CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol which requires States to progressively realize the rights contained therein and to avoid any regressive measures that jeopardize women's rights.

We further wish to express our concern on the statement by Zambia that all outstanding issues relating to human rights will be addressed by the Seventh National Development Plan which does not comprehensively address human rights concerns, particularly sexual and reproductive rights.

We urge the government to prioritize the holding of a people-driven referendum on the Bill of Rights, in good faith, in order to actualize the objectives of progressive national laws. This would require meaningful consultation, non-partisan process and as part of the larger CSO, we hope to work with government in ensuring the success of future National Referendum on the Bill of Rights in Zambia.

I thank you