

# The National Family Promotion and GBV Prevention Sub-cluster Meeting Minutes.

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**Venue** : Lemigo Hotel, Kigali.  
**Date and Time** : 10 May 2018, 9:00 am -13:30 pm  
**Chaired by** : Karekezi Alfred, Ministry of Gender & Family Promotion  
**Co-Chaired by** : Museruka David, RWAMREC ES

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## ***Agenda of the meeting***

- Welcome & Opening Remarks.
- Overview of New NGFC Guidelines.
- MIGEPROF on Achieves, challenges, opportunities and way forward for Family promotion and GBV prevention
- Open Discussion/Working Group Discussion.
- Closing Remarks and Ways Forwards.

## ***OPENING REMARKS BY MIGEPROF***

In his opening remarks, Karekezi Alfred, started by introducing himself and explaining that he was representing MIGEPROF in the place of Christiane Umuhire, Director of Family Promotion in MIGEPROF, who could not attend due to other conflicting engagements. He then moved on to thank all participants for joining the meeting, adding that this is an important meeting for the establishment of the National Gender and Family Cluster (NGFC). He stressed that the national gender and family cluster will serve as an important coordination mechanism of sharing information and facilitated effective planning and implementation of priorities enshrined in the national development agenda namely vision 2050, NST1 and SDGs domestication.

He said that the Rwandan government and its partners, like all participants here tonight, are committed to actively raising the quality of life for all Rwandan families, women and girls but that there are many actors working within this field and as such it has not always been easy to keep informed of each other's activities. The many actors with their individual strategies has undoubtedly resulted in unnecessary duplications and missed opportunities to cooperate. It was to

rectify this and ease a successful translation of policies, strategies and legal frameworks that the National Gender and Family Cluster (NGFC) was reviewed and officially instituted on March 29 2018, where four sub-clusters were established, including the Family Promotion and GBV Prevention Sub-cluster.

He noted that the objective of the meeting is to discuss deeply on the new Family Promotion and GBV Prevention Sub-cluster, as well as share information on key policy and planning processes within family promotion and GBV prevention. The purpose is also to use this meeting as an opportunity to source expertise and knowledge to identify focus priorities for a NGFC Strategic Plan.

He stressed that the current sub-cluster is still at its early setting structure, and that to become strong it needs to be nurtured by all stakeholders in Family promotion and GBV prevention. As such we hope this to be the start of a new era of cooperation, within family promotion and GBV prevention, but also to increase our cooperation with the entire National Gender and Family Cluster. He closed his opening remarks mentioning that the meeting marked an important step to joining efforts for strengthening coordination and sharing the information and wishing the participants to have a fruitful meeting.

### ***Welcoming Remarks by ES of RWAMREC***

The Executive Secretary of RWAMREC, David Museruka, started his remarks by greeting the representatives of different civil society organizations, and noted that it was a pleasure to co-chair this Family Promotion and GBV prevention sub-cluster, of which they are all members. He then emphasized the importance of this sub-clusters' work – as the issue of gender-based violence and domestic family related conflicts is not only an issue at the National level but an International human rights issue. Further he highlighted that while the GoR is at the helm of world's implementers and scores of gender equality scores but this being celebrated for, there is still much work to be done, and that the government needs help from all sectors represented in the meeting, to take on the challenges as they re-emerge. As such, he reminded the participants that all contributions towards a violent free society are most welcome.

He then reminded participants that gender mainstreaming is a cross cutting issue in all Rwandan programs and that the existence of the high political will that supports the implementation of gender equality policy is manifested in the Rwanda's enactment of different gender sensitive laws. This conducive environment is an opportunity, and to supplement the government's efforts, and all who



want to see our nation develop should take advantage of that opportunity. He finally noted that the current meeting should be seen in this context and is intended to strengthen in the collaboration, knowledge sharing, efficiency and coordination of our collective efforts towards a common issue of family promotion and GBV prevention. He then wished all participants to have an interesting meeting that will result in plenty of information sharing, as well as not leaving the efforts at discussion levels, but to carry them further to become concrete actions.

### ***Meeting Discussions and Recommendations***

Under moderation of Nadja Piironen, Bilateral Associate Expert at MIGEPROF, the meeting proceeded with two presentations. The first one was delivered by the Nadja Piironen on the guidelines for of National Gender and family Cluster<sup>1</sup>. She then spoke briefly about next steps and informed the meeting that the process to elaborate a strategic plan had started. The floor was then opened for questions. Participants appreciated the presentation but wondered about the sustainability of such an ambitious project, to which Piironen replied that the project indeed is ambitious, but that this only demonstrates the need to find funding for the NGFC Secretariat. Other participants wondered how the cluster could ensure representation of less visible groups' interests, such as refugees and adolescents, to which Piironen replied that it was exactly for that purpose that the cluster should be inclusive in its membership to ensure the perspective of all affected groups. Others mentioned a need to map stakeholders, on which Piironen agreed, while others wondered what differentiated the NGFC Strategic Plan from the MIGEPROF Strategic plan, to which Piironen replied that the NGFC Strategic Plan intends to be a guiding document for all institutions acting within Gender Equality and Family promotion, while the MIGEPROF Strategic plan sets out a strategy for MIGEPROF and the partners whose actions they are directly funding.

The second presentation was delivered by Alfred Karekezi which started with an overview of the Ministry's mandate and the ministry's view of family is at the center of national development. He then introduced the relevant key policies of the Ministry for this sub-cluster; the national policy for family promotion and the national Policy against Gender Based Violence. Karekezi then moved on to present central achievements such as having the law governing persons and families in place; as well as the law governing matrimonial regimes, donation and succession, the existence of home grown initiatives such as the Friends of Family (Inshuti z'Umuryango) model, the Umugoroba w'Ababyeyi Program; ITORERO, as well as the elaboration and dissemination of family performance contract booklet and the now 44 ISANGE One stop Centers.

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines annexed to minutes

Karekezi then said that despite many achievements there is still room for improvements, mentioning that the institutional structures within gender machinery do not apprehend the coordination of a cross cutting mandate, and that there is inadequate ownership of family promotion programs from different partners and implementers.

To change this he said that we need to effectively mainstream gender and family promotion in accountability mechanisms, especially in the performance contracts and strengthen reporting of sectorial policy strategy implementation; as well as strengthen the gender machinery's institutional capacity to respond to the need of effective coordination of their cross cutting mandate and ensuring close collaboration with CSOs, RBOs, Media, Private sector, and other existing forums to restore lost Rwandan cultural family values. He added that he hoped that they were taking the first steps towards that goal by engaging in this meeting.

The participants then engaged in discussion. Some wondered whether the Ministry is aware of root causes to why there are issues in families, and suggested to conduct research if not. The response given by Alfred was that some of the root causes of family conflicts are known such as drugs and alcohol abuse, cultural believes, poverty (economic dependence), psychological problems, prostitution, concubinage and adultery, limited knowledge of laws among others. He also added that the terms of reference for a research project on gender based violence and domestic conflicts in Rwanda is being finalized and that the research will be conducted as soon as possible with the World Bank project funds.

The issue of malnutrition was then brought up, mentioning a need for further research as the issue is still persisting. The meeting chair, Karekezi, explained that the GoR established in October 2017 the National Early Childhood Development Program (NECDP) which coordinates all interventions that support adequate early childhood development for children, from their conception to six years old, by particularly promoting positive parenting, increasing children's preparedness to primary education and reducing malnutrition and especially accelerate the reduction of stunting for children under 5 years of age through the multi-sectorial approach of ECD interventions (including Nutrition, Hygiene and WASH) at village level. He reminded that while it is an important issue under MIGEPROF mandate, which is being taken very seriously, the issue falls under the ECD sub-cluster.

Another participant then asked to ensure that family is at the center of all work and that strategies should consider this, it was further pointed out that parents should be consulted on the issues that they face so that they take part in finding solutions. Another participant hoped to get the next





meeting invitation and agenda earlier to be more aware of issues for the next meeting. Karekezi promised the next invitation would be sent earlier.

Another participant highlighted the importance of including other government entities, such as MINISANTE, with whom the cluster share joint mandates. The response was that up now the list of all members of the sub-cluster is not yet exhaustive, and the good idea was well noted.

Another participant then noted the structures at the local level are not effective – while they were there and had theoretically been initiated, there are many that in practice are not functional. He said that we should expect parents to participate in Umugoroba w’Ababyeyi (UwA, parents evening forum) as much as they participate in Umuganda, but that this is not yet the case. Another participant argued that UwA in some places has been turned into an income generating activity - which is an diversion from the original purpose and wondered if the Ministry is following this up to see if the intended outcomes are being attained? The chair of the meeting explained that Umugoroba w’Ababyeyi is normally a forum in which men and women from the same village sit together to exchange and share ideas, discuss and solve the problems and challenges of their families as well as devise strategies to effectively take advantage of the potentialities and opportunities available in their community. He further emphasized that monitoring and evaluation of UWA being done by the National Women Council in collaboration with local government.

Participants finally asked how to access relevant documentation, such as the booklet on UwA and the human trafficking manual. Participants were informed that all these documents are posted on MIGEPROF’S Website and if needed, these documents will be shared on their emails.

After discussions, the agenda was paused for a coffee break.

### ***Group Discussions and Recommendations***

After the break, the participants were divided into four groups to discuss and present on the following questions:

In the next five years:

1. What issues/areas should we (NGFC) focus on
2. Is there something we could focus less on / use a different approach for?
3. What concrete actions / results would you like to see?
4. Are there any mechanisms / structures that would help the NGFC to function as intended

***Group 1: What issues / areas should the Family Promotion and GBV Prevention Sub-cluster focus on?***

The first group argued the sub-cluster should focus on:

1. Teenage pregnancy prevention through positive parenting and reproductive health lessons in curriculums at the primary and secondary levels of education
2. Psycho Social support for trans-generational trauma of genocide survivors and perpetrators, landslide/climate change victims.
3. Strengthening current structures/home grown solutions like Umugoroba w'ababyeyi (Parents' evening), Inshuti Z'Umuryango
4. Creating and strengthening conducive environments for victims of GBV to have community awareness and sensitization – so victims can have a safe place to talk about their experiences and for creating awareness for community members to report perpetrators
5. To fill the gap in access to services such as the One Stop Center between communities at the village and cell levels and those in central areas. Example for an intervention can be – mobilizing teams / volunteers to reach out to those who are not able to seek the services.
6. Violence against women in the public sphere – women who trade across borders, refugees etc.
7. Mental health and addiction issues and the impact it has on family and gender based violence
8. Informing families on protective regulations against violence
9. Specifically target women and religious leaders on their role in narrowing the gap between the clash that can be created between culture/belief systems and regulatory responses in place
10. Addressing violence against children who work in the streets and the violence they experience as part of that life. This can be addressed by making sure the laws that protect them are enforced and by ensuring positive parenting lessons are extended to their caretakers.

***Group 2. Is there something the sub-cluster could focus less on / use a different approach for?***

The second groups then argued the cluster should focus on teenage pregnancy, family conflicts/domestic violence, and positive parenting (work with parents). Moreover, they thought this should be done through:

1. By MIGEPROF highlighting their profile in Family Promotion additionally to its visible work in Gender equality promotion;
2. By strengthening the dissemination of laws and policies at community level;
3. By strengthening the link of the cluster to the community based structures and mechanisms
4. By promoting education and awareness raising in order to help communities change in mentality and attitudes; and not only focusing on material support as a way of empowerment
5. By improving coordination and reporting mechanisms especially at local (district, sector, cell) levels.



***Group 3. What concrete actions / results would you like to see?***

The third group then argued the sub-cluster should focus on the strengthening of coordination mechanisms, including humanitarian actors within the cluster's work (UNHCR and others) and prisons, strengthening the coordination of community based structures that prevent and address GBV, linking the cluster to the community based structures, and adopting Gender Equality education in schools. They then said they hoped to see following concrete actions:

1. Clear guidance to all implementing partners in the 4 sub clusters in coordination and implementation of their activities (e.g. developing tools like training tools);
2. The cluster having influenced all key ministries and districts to include anti-GBV interventions in their performance contracts and district development plans and budgets;
3. Better involvement of religious organizations and FBOs in the cluster;
4. The cluster is including actors from all levels, all the way to the local level – with clear reporting from the local level to the national level (ICT based system e.g. GBVMIS)

***Group 4. Are there any mechanisms / structures that would help the NGFC to function as intended***

Finally the fourth group had the following suggestions to help the NGFC to function as intended:

1. All partners and stakeholders of MIGEPROF should avail their time and attend the NGFC and meeting of the four sub clusters.
2. To avoid duplication of staffs to use MIGEPROF Staff working on Child protection, ECD, Gender equality and women empowerment and family promotion and GBV prevention in the secretariat of the NGFC. The group also suggested that any hired staff should focus one the support of the four sub clusters because they have very much responsibility and have four annual meetings.
3. They also suggested having focal points of each sub cluster in the steering committee who will be monitoring and participating in the meeting of the concerned sub cluster to facilitate advocacy and follow the work in the sub clusters.
4. They also hoped that the NGFC could be a tool for resource mobilization for well functionality of the NGFC and its sub clusters.
5. They then suggested that the NGFC Steering committee should meet three times a year:
  - ✓ First meeting to be for annual planning (suggest to be done in June)
  - ✓ The second one to for progress report. to analyze work done by the sub clusters (suggest to be done between November and December)
  - ✓ The last one to be a final evaluation meeting –to be done between March and May)
6. Finally the fourth group suggested that MIGEPROF should to do a stakeholder mapping and based on that organize all stakeholders into relevant sub-clusters.

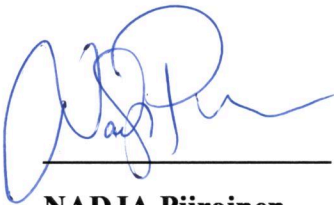


## **Closing Remarks**

The Chair of the meeting acknowledged and thanked everyone for their full and active participation of the members in the meeting and urged them to turn meeting resolutions into concrete actions, and then ensured all that information of the next meeting will be communicated well in advance before the next meeting.

The Executive Secretary of RWAMREC, co-chair of the meeting, also noted that their recommendations were related to bringing on board all organizations that intervene in the scope of our sub-cluster, and that to ensure this we should expect a more thorough and comprehensive mapping to be done. He closed the meeting by mentioning how impressed he was of the supportive comments and engagement during that meeting, and noted that if they continued with similar enthusiasm this cluster will surely be successful.

### **Minutes taken by:**



**NADJA Piironen**

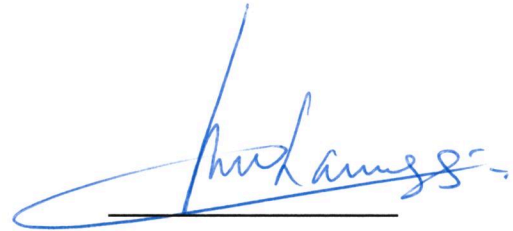
Associate Bilateral Expert  
MIGEPROF

### **Minutes approved by:**



**MUSERUKA David**

Executive Secretary  
RWAMREC



**KAREKEZI G. Alfred**

Family Promotion Expert  
MIGEPROF