



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE LAUNCH OF CHILD-FRIENDLY MATERIALS BASED ON THE CHILD CARE AND PROTECTION ACT, 2015 (ACT NO. 3 OF 2015).

PRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**BY HON. DR. EMMA KANTEMA, MINISTER OF GENDER
EQUALITY AND CHILD WELFARE**

JULY 2025

Honourable Speaker,
Honourable Members,

In 2019, the *Child Care and Protection Act, 2015 (Act No. 3 of 2015)* came into full operation. This comprehensive legislation stands as a cornerstone for the protection of children in Namibia. Its primary objective is to give effect to the rights of children as enshrined in Article 15 of the Namibian Constitution, as well as in key international instruments, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

In fulfilling this mandate, Namibia has been entrusted with the responsibility to ensure that the provisions of these vital legal instruments are made accessible and comprehensible to children. To this end, the Ministry undertook the important task of translating key provisions of the Child Care and Protection Act (CCPA) into a child-friendly version. This endeavour concentrated on critical areas such as harmful practices, HIV testing, medical consent, and child marriage.

Honourable Speaker,
Honourable Members,

This initiative marks a significant stride towards empowering our children with a clear understanding of their rights and the mechanisms available to safeguard them. It reflects the Government's unwavering commitment to fostering an enabling environment in which every child in Namibia can flourish, free from harm and with unfettered access to essential services.

The CCPA is indispensable to our efforts to secure the well-being of Namibian children. However, the impact of any law depends fundamentally on its accessibility and the extent to which its intended beneficiaries comprehend its provisions. The development and dissemination of these child-friendly materials, across multiple platforms, aim to bridge this divide ensuring that children, parents, caregivers, and communities alike are fully informed of the Act's stipulations. The materials developed encompass:

- Social media graphics
- Posters
- Pamphlets
- Booklets offering more detailed information
- Videos
- Radio dramas

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

Allow me now to briefly elucidate the content of these materials:

1. Harmful Practices:

These materials address deeply entrenched harmful practices that continue to imperil the physical and psychological well-being of our children. Often rooted in traditional beliefs, these practices manifest in various forms, including child labour, harmful initiation rites, bullying, certain religious practices, and the use of alcohol, substances, and drugs. The child-friendly materials clearly define what constitutes harmful practices, enabling children to identify and report such instances, thereby empowering them to seek assistance. By demystifying the law and presenting it in an accessible format, we equip children with the language and understanding to articulate their experiences and demand the protection they rightfully deserve.

2. Child Marriage:

Child marriage remains a grave infringement on a child's fundamental human rights, stealing their childhood, education, and future prospects. The Child Care and Protection Act unequivocally sets the minimum age of

marriage at 18 years. The child-friendly materials play a crucial role in disseminating this essential information directly to children and their communities. They elucidate the detrimental consequences of child marriage on a child's health, education, and overall development, while empowering children to understand their right to choose their own futures, free from coercion. Moreover, these materials educate parents and community leaders about the legal sanctions for facilitating child marriages and urge them to prioritize the education and well-being of their daughters. The Ministry intends to conduct targeted outreach using these materials in communities where child marriage persists, collaborating closely with traditional authorities and community-based organizations.

3. HIV Testing and Medical Consent:

The Child Care and Protection Act introduces progressive provisions concerning HIV testing and medical consent for minors, recognizing the evolving capacities of children. The child-friendly materials clearly explain that children aged 14 and above may consent to HIV testing independently, provided they possess sufficient maturity to comprehend the implications. For younger children, the Act permits consent if a qualified professional judges them mature enough to understand the benefits, risks, and social

consequences of testing, accompanied by appropriate pre- and post-test counselling. This provision empowers adolescents to take charge of their health and access vital services without fear or undue obstacles. The materials also clarify when parental or guardian consent is required for other medical interventions, and importantly, when a child's or parent's refusal can be overridden in the child's best interest. This balanced approach, now clearly articulated in the child-friendly versions, ensures that children's health needs are met while respecting their evolving autonomy.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

These child-friendly materials were launched on 12 June 2025, during the commemoration of the Day of the African Child. Their launch does not mark the conclusion of efforts but rather a significant milestone in the Ministry's ongoing commitment to child protection. The Ministry intends to intensify efforts to maximize reach and impact through:

- **Continuous Dissemination:** Ensuring the widespread availability of these materials in schools, health facilities, community centres, and across diverse media platforms, including translations into local languages. Currently, the

materials have been translated into Afrikaans, Silozi, Rukwangali, and Oshikwanyama, with plans to extend translation to all vernacular languages.

- **Capacity Building:** Providing training for frontline workers, teachers, traditional leaders, and community volunteers on the effective use of these materials and on engaging with children and communities regarding these sensitive issues.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establishing robust mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of these materials in raising awareness, encouraging reporting, and fostering behavioural change, especially in the areas of harmful practices, child marriage, HIV testing, and medical consent.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Creating safe and accessible channels for children and communities to provide feedback on the materials, allowing for their continuous refinement and adaptation.

Honourable Members,

By empowering our children with knowledge and ensuring their understanding of their rights under the Child Care and Protection Act, we are laying the foundation for a stronger, safer, and more just Namibia for all. The Ministry calls upon everyone here to join in this vital endeavour, championing the widespread utilisation and impact of these materials across all constituencies.

I thank you sincerely.