

Zimbabwe Council of Churches Statement on International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

26 June 2024

On this International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, we come together as Zimbabweans to address the alarming rates of drug abuse and illicit trafficking in our nation. According to recent statistics, drug abuse among Zimbabwean youth has increased significantly in recent years with continued reports of many struggling with addiction.



Today, as Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), we recognise that the most affected population is our youth, who are vulnerable to the deceptive allure of drug abuse. Looking at the devastating effects of drug and substance abuse such as increased risk in mental health disorders, Sexually Transmitted Diseases including HIV, and deaths resulting from overdose, it is important to acknowledge humanitarian challenges such as increased cycles of poverty, violence, and exploitation, thereby undermining the nation's progress and potential.

Inspired by this year's theme, **"The evidence is clear: invest in prevention"**, ZCC acknowledges the efforts by the Government of Zimbabwe in combating drug abuse and illicit trafficking. The establishment of the following: Inter-ministerial Committee (to address the alcohol, drugs and substance abuse problem), National Drug Master Plan (2020-2025), Zimbabwe National Drug Control Board, Youth Service Training and Programme and amendments to the Dangerous Drugs Act and the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform), as well as enhanced police operations and border control to disrupt drug trafficking and arrest perpetrators are some of the commendable efforts by the Government of Zimbabwe that we hope will go a long way in combating the drug and substance abuse pandemic.

In this regard, ZCC encourages continued collaboration between authorities, civil society and faith-based organisations to address this challenge mainly by addressing social determinants of drug and substance abuse such as poverty, unemployment and other underlying factors contributing to drug abuse.

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