KINGDOM OF ESWATINI

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

THE PREVENTION OF CHILD MARRIAGE IN ESWATINI

A rights-based and inclusive approach to protecting every girl and child

59th SADC Parliamentary Forum Plenary Assembly Symposium
Ezulwini Palazzo | Sunday, 22 November 2026

Symposium theme: Harnessing Political Leadership, Progressive Culture and Data

LEGAL AND HUMAN-RIGHTS FRAMEWORK IN ESWATINI

- ❑ **Constitution of Eswatini (2005):** chapter 3 : recognizes the fundamental rights and freedom of individuals.(respect for rights of the family, women, children, workers and persons with disabilities.
- ❑ **Children's Protection and Welfare Act, 2012:** establishes child-rights and protection obligations, including protection from harmful practices.
- ❑ **Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act, 2018:** provides a framework for addressing sexual offences and domestic violence.
- ✓ Sexual Offences against children carry **No Fine ,**
- ✓ Section 43 criminalizes Child Marriage
- ❑ **Persons with Disabilities Act, 2018:** provides for the rights, dignity, accessibility and participation of Persons with Disabilities.
- ❑ **International and regional commitments:** CRC, CEDAW, UNCRPD, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Maputo Protocol and SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

National Gender Policy / GBV response

The National Strategy to End Gender-Based Violence (2023–2027), National Gender Policy of 2023 and Positive Parenting Strategy provide a framework for prevention and response to Violence Against Women and Girls .

Disability planning

The National Disability Plan of Action (2024–2028) includes gender equality and under-represented groups as a dedicated thematic area.

Child protection

The National Plan of Action for Children (2023–2027) provides a wider framework for child wellbeing, protection and coordinated services.

Costed disability action

The Costed National Disability Plan of Action (2026–2028), launched in July 2026, provides an implementation-oriented and resourced roadmap for disability inclusion.

Opportunity: deliberately connect child protection, gender equality and disability programmes, budgets, indicators and accountability.

EFFORTS TO PREVENT CHILD MARRIAGE & THOSE ALREADY AFFECTED BY IT : PROGRAMS IN PLACE

- Incidence of Child Marriage : 3.6%

- **Intervention aimed at eradicating child marriage targets;**

✓ Parents & Guardians, Teachers,

✓ Community members, traditional leaders,

✓ Faith Based Organizations

✓ Legislators, children (Adolescent girls).

✓ Subject Matter is embedded in programs on GBV, Positive Parenting , SODV Act, CPWA of 2012

The answer is not to restrict girls' choices, but to remove barriers and strengthen their safety, autonomy and support.

EFFORTS TO PREVENT CHILD MARRIAGE & THOSE ALREADY AFFECTED BY IT : PROGRAMS IN PLACE

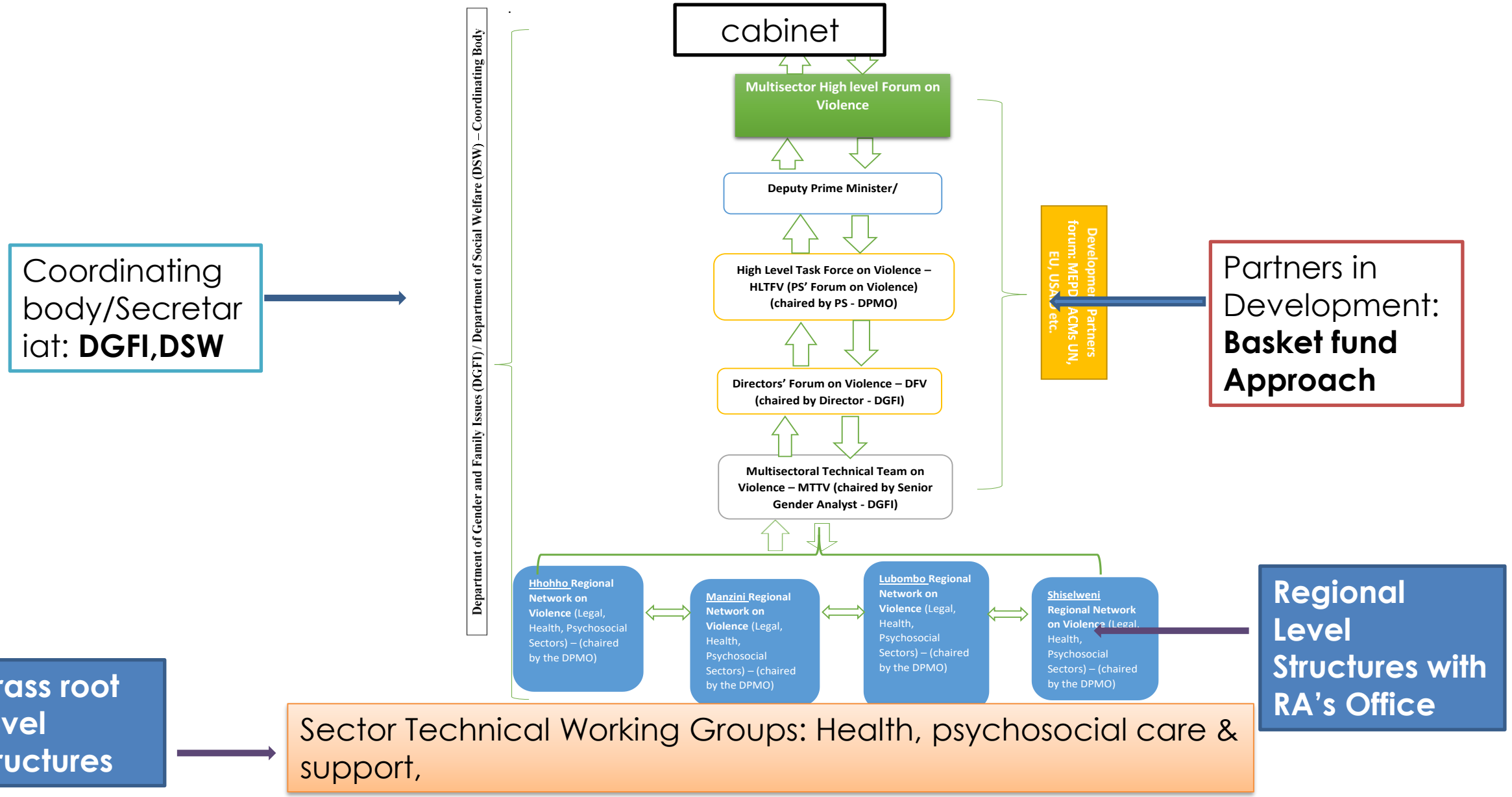
- ❑ Educational sessions targeting Parents, traditional leaders, community service providers, Faith Based Organizations, etc
- ❑ Girls and boys empowerment Clubs addressing issues on Anti Teenage pregnancy, Child Rights, Self worth, Leadership
- ❑ Child headed Household Program- targeting OVC. The program provides agricultural inputs, backyard gardens, decent shelter, food parcels, etc.
- ❑ Family Re-unification Program-
- ❑ Role modeling and mentorship programs
- ❑ Educational Sessions at Cultural and national events, targeting young boys and girls
- ✓ Young maidens also create songs with messages challenging VAC, GBV, & Teenage Pregnancies
- ✓ Includes distribution of dignity kits
- ✓ Food hampers
- ❑ Radio, Social Media and TV programs

EFFORTS TO PREVENT CHILD MARRIAGE & THOSE ALREADY AFFECTED BY IT : PROGRAMS IN PLACE





COORDINATION MECHANISM



A CALL TO ACTION

- Protect every child's dignity, safety and right to develop to their full potential.

Eswatini's commitment

- Accelerate legal, institutional and cultural change through political leadership and shared responsibility.
- Ensure girls with disabilities are heard, included and supported as equal rights-holders.

Leave no girl behind. End child marriage. Build an inclusive Eswatini.

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THANK YOU

SIYABONGA