



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zambia to the United Nations

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Media Statement

For Immediate Release

UN praise Kaseba-Sata for anti-early marriages campaign

NEW York, Monday, May 13, 2013 – The United Nations has commended Zambia’s First Lady Dr Christine Kaseba-Sata for her advocacy against early marriages.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director Dr Babatunde Osotimehin said his organization was ready to work with the Zambian First Lady’s campaign to end early marriages.

“We want to thank you for your interest in child marriages in Zambia and the fact that in April you launched the campaign against child marriage. For us, it’s [child marriage is] a violation of the rights of a child,” Dr Osotimehin said.

The UNFPA chief was speaking when he met Dr Kaseba-Sata at UNFPA Headquarters in New York on Monday.

Dr Osotimehin commended Dr Kaseba-Sata for her advocacy in combating breast and cervical cancer and her other key roles in promotion of health service delivery in Zambia.

The First Lady, on her part, highlighted the shortage of midwives and requested UNFPA to help Zambia train more midwives to safeguard the lives of women and newborn babies.

Dr Kaseba-Sata said traditional leaders – especially chief Mumena of North Western Province, who is the Champion for safe motherhood – were doing a commendable job in promotion of safe delivery.

The First Lady also expressed optimism that the constitution, currently being formulated in Zambia, would include sexual and reproductive health.

And Zambia’s Ambassador to the United Nations, Dr Mwaba Kasese-Bota, who accompanied the First Lady to the UNFPA, said the Zambian Government had prioritised quality health service delivery, among other critical sectors.

She noted that brain-drain in the health sector was “the thing of the past” because the Government had improved the salaries for health personnel hence many are opting to work in Government institutions.

However, the Ambassador said the staffing levels in health institutions were still low and the Government was pushing to train more personnel.

Ambassador Kasese-Bota urged UNFPA to work closely with the Government of Zambia and the Office of the First Lady.

Dr Kaseba-Sata, a globally recognised advocate for reproductive health and promotion of women and girl’s rights, is in New York to attend the GBCHealth 2013 Conference, taking place from 15 to 17 May, 2013.

The Zambian First Lady will be one of the key speakers at the international conference.

Issued by:

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Captions:

Zambia’s First Lady Dr Christine Kaseba-Sata (left) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director Dr Babatunde Osotimehin at UNFPA Headquarters in New York on Monday May 13, 2013. PHOTO | CHIBAULA SILWAMBA | GRZ

First Lady Dr Christine Kaseba-Sata signing the visitors’ book at the Permanent Mission of Zambia to the United Nations in New York on Monday May 13, 2013. PHOTO | CHIBAULA SILWAMBA | GRZ