



# Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of We Will Speak Out South Africa

Held on the 3rd of April 2019 at 09:30 at the Diakonia Centre, Durban

## Attendance:

### *PRESENT*

See attached attendance list.

### *APOLOGIES*

George Dalka, Bishop Tsietsi Seloane (Anglican Diocese of Natal), Cardinal Napier (Catholic Church), Lesley Frescura (We are all Church SA), Dudu Radebe (PACSA)

## Welcome and Opening Prayer

The WWSOSA Chairperson, Lyn van Rooyen, welcomed all those present, and also opened in prayer.

## Approval of Agenda

The Agenda was unanimously approved.

## Approval of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the Annual General Meeting of We Will Speak Out South Africa (WWSOSA) held on 28 November 2017 (circulated at the beginning of the meeting) were taken as read, and were unanimously adopted as a true reflection of the meeting. Proposed by Dr Dlamini and seconded by Ashmeer Joseph.

## Annual Narrative Report

### *NARRATIVE ANNUAL REPORT – TABLED*

The Coordinator Gennrich, Coordinator We Will Speak Out South Africa (WWSOSA) presented the Annual Report. The Coordinator gave some background on the formation of the coalition. The work to formally register the coalition 'We will Speak Out South Africa' was done in 2016 and 2017, as an outcome of a previous project. WWSOSA also opened its bank account in June 2017. As determined in the constitution, the financial year for WWSOSA runs from 1<sup>st</sup> July to June 30<sup>th</sup> every year.

During 2018, WWSOSA had only 2 sources of funding – one was a carry-over from 2017 (Act Alliance Southern Africa) and the other was DGMT funds allocated to communications work only. The latter was earmarked for

Management Committee: Ag. Chair: Ms Lyn van Rooyen; Ag. Dep. Chair: Rev Bafana Khumalo, Treasurer: Mr Simon John Read; Members: Ms Solange Mukamana, Ms Nompilo Gcwensa, Mr Mxolisi Nyuswa, Rev Phumzile Mabizela; Ms Amy Leigh Benn, Ms Puseletso Modimogale. Coordinator: Ms Daniela Gennrich.

developing an increasingly strong presence on social media. By being in the public space, WWSOSA influences the way people think. This is important, as a lot of unacceptable behaviour in churches is being exposed, and it is important for the coalition to speak into these situations. Social Media and print media give the coalition opportunities to influence the way the church deals with GBV.

The Coordinator expressed her thanks to the Management Committee for undertaking many tasks during the course of 2018 when there was limited funding on a volunteer basis and showing so much commitment. She mentioned that this has been a sign of the sustainability of WWSOSA. Usually donors look for the presence of funding as a sign of sustainability, but the fact that WWSOSA continued to function and in fact to deepen its work, is a sign that it is a viable coalition that can survive and even thrive during challenging times.

The Coordinator reminded the members present that no one in the room 'has it right' when it comes to stopping gender violence, but everyone does their best. "We try. We are on a journey, even though none of us has been able to end gender based violence, and we are all at different points on this journey, and learning as we go along."

She reported on a major event that took place in the past financial year: WWSOSA's 2<sup>nd</sup> AGM and conference in Glenridge, where survivors shared what it was like to approach faith leaders for help as survivors of Gender based Violence (GBV). The dialogue is captured in a booklet "Asikhulume, Sizwane! Open faith-based conversations about sexual and gender-based violence", which is available online free in PDF, and is intended for use in church groups who are trying to address sexual and gender based violence.

As follow-up to the conference:

- A Whatsapp group was formed on the theme *Survivors in Solidarity* for everyone in KZN who does any work on gender based violence, and some Gauteng partners have also joined it.
- A media statement was put together for the press and social media.

She explained that the conference focused on churches, because of the current media attention around churches in South Africa. However, WWSOSA works with people of all faiths and wants to hear about the work of other faiths too - what they are doing to address SGBV amongst their own leadership and in their own structures, as well as their work around GBV in society.

The Coordinator confirmed that WWSOSA has some funding for the current financial year, although it is very limited, and so members can expect more face to face activities than in 2018. She highlighted a recent media article quoting research that showed that no political party in SA has a sexual harassment policy and said that it would be interesting to assess how many churches have functioning policies.

The Coordinator explained that WWSOSA doesn't work on behalf of survivors, but WWSOSA works with and alongside survivors. She mentioned the close partnership between the WWSOSA Coordination Hub and the community-based Phephisa Survivors Network, which is seen by WWSOSA as a potential core of a wider survivor movement in South Africa.

One of the tools that is used to capacitate people who want to do something in the field of GBV is the WWSOSA website.

*"We are not containing HIV in South Africa. There are over 2000 new infections per week amongst young women aged 14-25. Unless we deal with some of the underlying factors like GBV, we will just go backwards."* (WWSOSA Coordinator)

### *FUTURE PLANS:*

The Coordinator highlighted the following plans for 2019:

- Continuing the communications work and media coverage that was developed in the previous year.
  - She requested that all Coalition members consider publicizing their events via WWSOSA's communication channels (Facebook, Instagram, and the monthly newsletters), so that members can be much more supportive of one another's work, and can also learn from each other.
  - This will also increase the possibilities of joint advocacy work, as partners connect with others with similar interests, thus strengthening the voices for change in the faith sector as well as amplifying the voices of the faith sector in broader GBV advocacy in society.
- The main 2019 funding has come from Amplify Change in the UK, but further funding needs to be sought to continue this work, which was started by Tearfund in 2013.
- Another AGM is planned for late 2019, as this AGM was delayed due to lack of funding. WWSOSA welcomes suggestions for relevant themes for the joint conference planned for that day.
- She suggested two main campaigns for the year which emerged through interaction with members:
  - A round table discussion, leading to possible joint actions, among faith leaders, government representatives, NGOs and other interested sectors on the issue of 'blessers' and what is possibly a local sex trafficking web in KZN and other provinces that exploits young women and even school girls. This may even be an underlying factor in the massive teen pregnancy rates at high schools (with over 3000 school girls being reported pregnant in 2018).
  - A Campaign collaboratively developing an ecumenical prophetic theology of human sexuality (in its widest sense). This campaign will go well beyond WWSOSA and include academics, NOGOs, activists and local community survivor movement representatives.

## **Financial Matters**

### *FINANCIAL REPORT.*

Simon Read, the Treasurer, tabled the Audited Financial Report, 1 July 2017-30 June 2018. He referred to the WWSOSA laptop as its only current asset.

He mentioned the funding challenges, but also emphasized that WWSOSA's main assets are its people, as has been witnessed during the past year and a half, by the active involvement of many members and their passion for gender justice in the faith sector.

Coral Vinsen from Amnesty International Durban raised the point that Amnesty International would like to be affiliated to We Will Speak Out.

The Coordinator thanked the Treasurer for all the time he committed to WWSOSA in 2018 and to date.

### *RESOURCE MOBILISATION REPORT*

The Coordinator explained which strategies WWSOSA has used and continues to use to mobilize resources:

- Responding to calls
- Being open to forming partnerships to submit joint proposals with organisations with shared goals and objectives with WWSOSA
- Marketing, active website management and social media.

There is a link to an online funding and social media site, “Loving thy neighbor” on the WWSOSA Facebook page. Those present were urged to visit this site and contribute, or send the link to people they know who might contribute.

The Coordinator added that WWSOSA is looking at providing services to generate income. Services could be offered by WWSOSA or in partnership with other organisations. Services can also be used as a way to influence the gender based violence discourse in the faith sector and wider society.

*“As soon as people get to know us more and know that the faith sector is involved in GBV, we will get more funders.”*  
(WWSOSA Coordinator)

### **DISCUSSION –**

The question was raised why a lot of work around the theme ‘Church and education’ and ‘gender and theology’ in general hasn’t really come off the ground.

The Coordinator Gennrich pointed at the need to be unified, but that the various denominations need to also explore their denominational views and then make that decision to come together and stand together against GBV.

## **Management Committee Elections**

### **MEMBERSHIP NOMINATIONS:**

Current Committee Members: 9; Resigned: 1 (Survivor Rep)

The Constitution requires that two (2) of the members represent Survivor groups.

Background information was provided by the Chair in respect of the following nominees, both from groups that are members of the Phephisa Survivor Network:

- Sharon Sithole and
- Esperance Maramuke Matumaini.

Voting took place by secret ballot.

Esperance was elected, by 1 vote difference. The contributions of both nominees to the work of Phephisa were celebrated, and Esperance was congratulated and accepted on to Management Committee.

### **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEES:**

The Chair invited members present to consider volunteering for various subcommittees to assist with diverse aspects of the work of the Coalition. She presented the various sub committees and asked people to consider becoming active:

Eleven (11) members offered themselves for the subcommittees, as follows:

- *Advocacy, media and communication:* Nombuyiselo Noka, Dumisani Mvuyana, Saydoon Nisa Sayed, Michou Kabange (Media and Comm)
- *Reflective learning:* Lamec Remacle Ciza, Mbali Biyela, Doctor Dlamini, Zama Dlamini
- *Finances and resource mobilization:* Nqabakazi Mathe (Joint fundraising)

- *Gender and theology:* Lamec Remacle Ciza, Charmaine Dangers, Mbali Biyela, Doctor Dlamini, Juba Kuzwayo
- *Ad hoc logistics:* No volunteers at this stage

*Question from the floor:*

'What do we do concretely with issues of GBV?'. Lyn explained that the second part of the meeting, the conference, will focus on this question. Lyn reminded the attendants that WWSOSA is not a service provision organisation. WWSOSA however is putting together a database to share information about services provided by coalition members.

***CLOSING PRAYER AND FORMAL CLOSURE OF MEETING***

The Chair thanked those present for their participation and Bishop Dino Gabriel closed with a prayer.

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***SIGNED:***

Chairperson: Lyn van Rooyen

Date:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_