**Key points for the speech by The Most Rev Bernard Ntahoturi,**

**Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Burundi at the JLI-World Bank event**

**Burundi**

* Since its independence in 1962 from Belgium, the long years of civil war have had a significant impact on sanitation, infrastructure and human development. Classified as a low-income country, it is listed as one of the five poorest countries in the world, with almost 70% of its population living below the poverty line. The Global Hunger Index lists Burundi as one of the three countries with extremely alarming levels of hunger.
* The impact of conflict has not only affected the development of the country, but also worsened the conditions for women and girls, increasing incidents of SGBV. The lack of infrastructure makes it challenging to address this issue while the lack of national discourse makes near to impossible to prosecute perpetrators which leads to increase in impunity and more importantly also stigma on survivors.
* It is challenging to gauge the impact of SGBV in Burundi due to the lack of prevalence data because of the lack of access to health-care services for survivors, and the corrupt and slow judicial system.
* In 2013 the Ministry of Gender reported 19,530 cases of SGBV and 13,560 cases in 2014. Important to highlight that 2,471 and 1143 rapes were reported respectively. We know that in any context the reported numbers are only a fraction of the real situation.
* The SERUKA center, a non-government health care facility reported that they received up to 20 victims of SGBV per day, almost 60% of them being under the age of 15.

**The Church in Burundi, it’s reach and influence**

* Burundi is predominantly a Christian country, with over 80% of the population affiliated to the Christian faith.
* The church is massively influential in Burundi. The Anglican Church was founded in 1935. The first diocese of Matan established in 1992 has grown greatly since then. We have 8 dioceses consisting of 155 parishes, served by 302 pastors. Our membership is approximately 1.5million people at the moment. Our mothers union has a membership of 16,985 women.
* As a faith-based organization it was not enough for us to just respond to the spiritual needs of the people, but we wanted to promote the holistic wellbeing of our people. This means not only addressing their spiritual needs, but also what affects their day-to-day life. This is the mandate of the church. Knowing that many of the people in our congregations were hurting and needed our support.

**The PEAB SGBV response**

* This need to address SGBV began our partnership with Tearfund and ERD.
* The “Silent No More” study in Burundi to hear the voices of survivors really opened the eyes of the church. Knowing about how SGBV impacts lives and hearing directly from survivors changes everything. We knew we needed to respond to their needs, to their hopes. They were counting on us as the church.
* Our response in partnership with TF and ERD was shaped by the voices of the survivors and their needs. The 18 month pilot in 2 key dioceses focused on engaging our leadership, training them to build their capacity to respond, but also more importantly on how the church can be a safe space for survivors. We reached out to the survivors in our communities to create a space for them to come together, to share, to take them on a journey of healing and more importantly also link them to healthcare and legal support.
* Our work was not done in just responding to survivors, we knew that we needed to address the harmful norms that lead to violence. We wanted to understand how these notions were linked influenced by faith. The “Men, Faith and Masculinities” study showed how scriptures were interpreted to sustain gender inequality and also this harmful notion of manhood. This informed our work with men and boys to promote an alternative model for manhood. The “Transforming Masculinities” work focused on prevention, building health relationships and more importantly promoting a positive model for masculinities and gender equality.

**Our value addition/niche**

* The Church in Burundi is uniquely positioned to be a catalyst in ending SGBV. We are present where there is no hospital or police station. We also have ongoing interactions with the community. The people trust us and look to us for guidance. This role is only fulfilled by a faith organization.
* Despite the conflict and the challenges the church is a constant in the lives of our people, we are there for them and with them. This is a great opportunity to make sure that there are safe spaces for those who need and seek. We have great relationships with the local government and work in partnership with them to advance the wellbeing of our people.
* At the national level, the Anglican province is known and acknowledged for is work on development. We have access to policy-making forums and have great partnerships with non-governmental stakeholders. This is key in working together.
* Our reach is beyond the walls of the church building, people of all faith in our communities come to us, and we go to them. This gives us the opportunity to promote the wellbeing of all Burundians.
* When the church breaks the silence, there is very little room for impunity, and more importantly the church can address stigma, and this we have been able to do effectively to restore the dignity of survivors.

**Our impact and reach**

* In such a short time we have been able to directly engage 2066 people, this is excluding the 1000s of people our trained pastors reach on Sundays through our sermons, our men’s, women’s and youth groups.
* We have been able to train 76 leaders in our parishes, and 12 of our churches are equipped to be safe spaces for survivors.
* 30 survivors have been supported through this program. This is the beginning to a survivor’s movement. We are committed to making sure our churches are safe spaces and will journey along these hurting, but resilient women and girls.
* Our work on “Transforming Masculinities” has engaged 594 people through various trainings and community dialogues. 307 men and 287 women.
* We are in the process of adapting this to our other dioceses and this will give us the potential to reach all 16,000 of our mother’s union members, and with the potential to impact all 1.5million of membership and beyond. We are willing and believe that we can end SGBV in Burundi, by the grace of God.

**A story of transformation**

* Meet Ps. Alex of Ntaho parish. He participated in the “Transforming Masculinities” program, and this is what he had to say about the change in his life, his church and community. (Important points are underlined)

“Many things changed in my home and in the Church as Church members testify. I have trained two teams already and one more is about to finish the course. Five women were beaten and some underwent sexual abuse in the home by their husbands but now they said that things changed in their homes. One woman was beaten and mistreated because she was giving birth to only girls but now things changed because of the training they got and the sharing of the teachings with their husband.”

“I found understood that there were times I treated my wife wrong, and this is harmful to my wife and the surrounding people. I was not concerned by the problems related to SGBV of my people including the Church members but after being part of the discussion on masculinity, my heart was touched. Now he is part of the solution than being part of the problem. I’m more caring than before. Out church has just built 2 houses for Church members who are not able and now another one is under construction. “

“The conversations on masculinities gripped my heart and changed me and this brought me to an open and constructive and fruitful discussion with my wife and the dialogue continues on different matters. I also mobilized the Church members to care for their families as a whole and their children regardless of the gender for schools and health. There is transformation-taking place in the Church now. I also have sensitized the administration and the police to participate in the awareness against the SGBV and telling the people that they will face the Law if they abuse any person.“

Ps. Alex was also named as one of the 50 global heroes fighting to end violence against children by “Together for Girls”.