



COZA House, Gazelle Close,  
Corporate Park South, Midrand,  
1685 South Africa

Sarah Murray  
**Acting Secretariat**  
Email TO:  
ictcouncil@ictsectorcouncil.org.za  
Email CC:  
chair@ictsectorcouncil.org.za  
depchair@ictsectorcouncil.org.za

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**B-BBEE ICT Sector Council commends the launch of the Interactive Gender-Based Violence Engagement Platform by the SA Women in ICT Forum and GovChat supported by the Departments of Communications and Digital Technologies and Social Development**

Yesterday, on the occasion of International Women’s Day, the South African Women in ICT Forum and GovChat launched an Interactive Gender-Based Violence Engagement Platform to support victims of gender-based violence and their families by providing them with access to social services through the GovChat portal.

Speaking as Keynote Speaker at the event, Minister of Social Development, Ms Lindiwe Zulu said: “As you will recall that the president indicated in his State of the Nation Address, emphasised that ending gender-based violence is imperative if we are to lay claim to being a society rooted in equality and non-sexism. Accordingly, dealing with it both effectively and efficiently requires a multi-stakeholder approach, coordination and commitment from all sectors of society.”

Speaking on the power of technology, Deputy Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, Ms Pinky Kekana stated that “gender-based violence is such a complex issue, and while technology won’t necessarily be the sole solution when addressing social ills like gender-based violence, it gives us important verification data – like time and location – and to services like secure, cloud-based directory for better reporting and policy making.”

This too was emphasised by the Chairperson of the SA Women in ICT Forum and Deputy Chairperson of the B-BBEE ICT Sector Council, Ms Sonwabise Mzinyathi in her opening remarks. “Our launch today by the SA Women in ICT Forum and GovChat is reclaiming these technologies for the fight against

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violence on women by strengthening the ICT capacity of women's rights through our interactive gender-based violence engagement platform. It will help us to evaluate interventions and measure impact. We will have visibility into gender-based violence high risk areas by location, timezone and peak period using GovChat's high tech data driven platform."

Unveiling the platform was GovChat CEO, Mr. Eldrid Jordaan. The platform is live on the GovChat portal and is zero-rated. It is an interactive engagement platform that has features that allow it to be constantly improved in an agile and innovative manner as and when new information is available so that it is constantly improved. The platform will allow victims of gender-based violence and their families access to information on key social agencies where they could get assistance and support. It will also give the National Gender-Based Violence Command Centre and other government stakeholders visibility into gender-based violence high risk areas by location, time zone and peak period using GovChat's high tech data driven platform.

Providing insight into the scourge that is gender-based violence in South Africa was CEO of the Soul City Institute, Ms Phinah Kodisang who also provided information on the work being done by civil society to fight gender-based violence. The launch also had messages of support from UNICEF Country Officer, Ms Christine Muhigana and MTN South Africa's Vice President for Corporate Affairs, Ms Jacqui O'Sullivan.

The platform is live and available to over 5 million users of GovChat ranging from a lower LSM.

As the champions and custodians of transformation in the ICT sector, the B-BBEE ICT Sector Council is pleased with the increased deployment of technology to respond to the socio-economic challenges of our communities.

We call on all stakeholders to promote the maximum use of this intervention for victims of gender-based violence and their families.

### **Issued by the B-BBEE ICT Sector Council**

### **About the B-BBEE ICT Sector Council**

The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) ICT Sector Council (the ICT Council) is established in terms of the Codes of Good Practice issued under Section (9.1) of Act No. 46 of 2013,

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Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act, 2013 Amended Guidelines for Developing and Gazetting of Sector Codes, notice 408 of 2015, 06 May 2015. This was followed by the appointment of the first members of the ICT Council for a term of four years by the then ICT Sector Line Minister, Minister of Telecommunications & Postal Services on 23 September 2015 after being concurred by the Cabinet Meeting of 23 September 2015.

On 12 March 2020 the ICT Council constituted the Second Term of the ICT Council. This comes after the decision by Honourable Ms Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams, Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies to appoint 22 individuals as members to serve on the Second Term of the ICT Council. The appointment of members of the ICT Council is effective from 1 February 2020 to 31 January 2024.

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