



# CAMPAIGN TO END CHILD MARRIAGE IN AFRICA

NEWSLETTER

2018 EDITION

## MEETING OF CSO REFERENCE GROUP TO THE AU CAMPAIGN ON ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE IN AFRICA: 10-11 MAY 2018 AD- DIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA.

Prior to the introductory meeting which was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in April 2017, the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage held the following CSO Ref Group where the main objectives of the meeting were to discuss how to better link the AU Campaign to community level organisations, establish a clear definition of the ways of work of the CSO RG, Discuss preparation for the 2nd African Girls' Summit on Ending Child marriage as well as link the work plan to the AU Campaign in order to achieve a strong synergy.

The dynamic role of the CSOs in the communities led the Commission's Department of Social Affairs to assemble a CSO Reference Group to work directly with the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage. The CSO RG is comprised of nine organizations across Africa, representing different stakeholders and reflecting regional balance.

## ZAMBIA POST LAUNCH COUNTRY VISIT: 16 - 17 MAY 2018

The African Union delegation led by the special rapporteur on ending child marriage and the Executive secretary of the ACERWC conducted a post launch country visit to Zambia. The President of the Republic of Zambia H.E President Edgar Chagwa Lungar is also the African Champion on Ending Child Marriage. The Government of the Republic of Zambia has been one of the leading Member States in taking large strides to end the practice of child marriage at national level and also campaigning against this

harmful practice continentally and globally. It is important for the AU Campaign to have information on the implementation of government policies and to be more involved in grassroots activities. As such during this country visit the AU delegation including partners such as Save The Children, Plan International had the opportunity to travel 99.2 km outside of Lusaka to the chieftaincy of Chibombo to meet with His Royal Highness, Chief Chamuka who is among the most exemplary leaders spearheading the end of child marriage and protecting the girl child in Zambia. During this meeting the Chief informed that the chieftom has undertaken projects including building a school in the chieftom and also, the chieftom in collaboration with other CSOs on ground built an all-girls self-sustaining boarding school and made sure they received 30Kwacha (equivalent 3.00USD) for personal hygiene and toiletries boarding school and building one stop centres.

The overall purpose of this mission was an opportunity to meet with key Zambian government ministries, partners and other stakeholders including to learn more of the legislative and customary laws and actions that are in place in Zambia to protect the girl child.





**AFRICAN GIRLS CAN CODE INITIATIVE: 20 – 30 AUGUST 2018**

More than 100 girls took part in an exciting new initiative entitled “African Girls Can Code” in Addis Ababa on the 20 – 30 August 2018. It was the first training camp where 88 girls from 32 different African countries were trained. This 4 year project will run from 2018 – 2022. The main purpose of this initiative is to enhance entrepreneurship and new business opportunities through use of new information technology and how African countries can draw on new digital – including mobile - technologies and skills transfer to allow business models and entrepreneurs to leapfrog.

This initiative is a joint project between the African Union Commission, UN Women and International Telecommunications Union (ITU) aiming at promoting girls in STEM and ICT.

Coding and other ICT skills are essential in the future labour market. By 2020, it is expected that more than 7.1 million jobs will be displaced, and by 2050, half of the jobs that currently exist will have disappeared. That means that 65% of the children entering primary school today could eventually work in jobs that do not yet currently exist. So if African girls and women are to be part of the fast-growing sectors in the future job market, they simply need to develop ICT skills. In order to achieve this, enabling learning and professional environments need to be created that can challenge gender stereotypes about young girls and women in coding and ICT.



**CAIRO, EGYPT: POST LAUNCH COUNTRY VISIT, 25 - 27 SEPTEMBER 2018**

The Arab Republic of Egypt has been a key advocate in promoting the rights and welfare of children by developing concrete national strategies to empower vulnerable children.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss and identify the current status and progress made by Egypt in improving the national strategies and the level of intervention for the protection of the girl child. The aim was to connect with the National Council of Childhood and, Motherhood, (NCCM) the leading Ministry in Egypt working for the protection of children, as well as connecting with relevant governmental ministries, partners and stakeholders to share experiences on the legislation and actions that have been taken in Egypt to protect the girl child and combat child marriage.

The AU delegation including representatives from the NCCM had the opportunity to go for a field visit outside of Cairo to the governorate of El Fayoum to meet the Governor General Essam Saad and to see the latest activities implemented in El Fayoum Governorate “Promoting Children’s Rights and Family Empowerment” programme.



**ASMARA, THE STATE OF ERITREA: POST LAUNCH COUNTRY VISIT, OCTOBER 16 – 18 2018**

The AUC Campaign to End Child Marriage team conducted a post launch country visit to the State of Eritrea where they met with the ministries working to end child marriage specifically Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour.

Eritrea has developed a committee consisting of these ministries including other ministries as part of a multi - sectorial approach in their strategy to end child marriage and female genital mutilation in the country. The team also went on a field visit to the town of Aditekelezan where they met with the community- religious and traditional leaders, parents, legal officers and also visited the Community Hospital. This field visit showcased the good practices that Eritrea has from national to community level working to end child marriage as well as the number of stake holders involved in fighting against harmful practices.

It was noted that Eritrea needs to document their good practices and share with other African countries to learn their programs and experiences in ending child marriage and FGM.

**JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA: SIDE PANEL AT THE RESEARCH TRIANGLE INSTITUTE WITH THE CONFERENCE THEME: “BEYOND THE CHILD MARRIAGE CAMPAIGN WITH THE FOCUS ON EVIDENCE AND IMPACT” 8 – 9 OCTOBER 2018**

The Ford foundation, a long standing partner and the main financial supporter of the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa organized a symposium that reflected on evidence and impact on ending child marriage. As a key partner, the Com-

mission through the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage team made a presentation and was a discussant at this meeting and discussed on strengthening Ford Foundations support to the next phase of the campaign.

The symposium brought together various stake holders including civil society organizations, government and academia with the aim to raise awareness on the progress of the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage. The symposium reflected on key achievements and lessons learnt from the work of CSOs, donors, regional and global organizations in its efforts to prevent and end child marriage. This meeting also assisted in articulating how to better respond to child marriage in the African context and to define future priorities and strategies from local to regional level.



**MEETING ON YOUTH VOLUNTEERS’ CONTRIBUTION TO THE AU CAMPAIGN TO END CHILD MARRIAGE IN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA: 31 OCTOBER - 1 NOVEMBER 2018**

The African Union’s Campaign to End Child Marriage in collaboration with Ford foundation hosted an evaluation meeting in Johannesburg with the AUC Youth Division.

The objective of this meeting on the youth volunteer project on ending child marriage was an open discussion on the campaign, experience sharing and a learning opportunity that informed the way forward and how better to engage ministries at country level and other stakeholders on ECM.

The meeting gave an opportunity for each of the youth volunteers who were deployed to Chad, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi and Zimbabwe respec-

tively to work in Ministries working to end child marriage to each make a brief presentation on their experiences including achievements and challenges during their one year deployment.

### **THE 2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MATERNAL, NEW BORN AND CHILD HEALTH NAIROBI, KENYA: 29 – 31 OCTOBER 2018**

As child marriage is one of the main reasons for teen pregnancies in the developing world, the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage team was invited and given the opportunity to attend the 2nd International Conference on Maternal, New born and Child Health in Nairobi, Kenya and present in the parallel session entitled “Breaking the cycle by ending child marriage-key to ending teen pregnancy”. The Conference aimed to maintain momentum and focus towards ending preventable maternal and child deaths by 2030.

The session was a success in promoting the work of the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage, furthermore in forging possible new partnerships with relevant organizations to increase momentum of the campaign.



### **THE 2ND AFRICAN GIRLS SUMMIT ON ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE AND OTHER HARMFUL PRACTICES: 23 – 24 NOVEMBER 2018**

The Government of the Republic of Ghana in collaboration with the Commission of the African Union hosted the 2nd African Girls Summit on the theme “Enough with the Silence” from 23-24 November 2018. The summit was opened in the presence of H.E. Rebecca Akufo - Addo the First Lady of Ghana as well as the First Ladies of Niger, Liberia, Chad and Sierra Leone.

Other relevant stakeholders namely development partners, celebrity Ambassadors, the advisory committee on Ending Child Marriage, traditional and religious leaders, youth groups, government agencies, NGOs and CSOs, market women association and law enforcement agencies and associated groups were also in attendance.

Two days prior to the Girls Summit there was a Youth Pre- Summit from 21 – 22 November for youth where they were given the opportunity to bring their ideas from different perspectives such as education for boys and girls, sexual reproductive health, ending child marriage, the role of the youth in community, among others and the way forward.

The African Girls summit was organized by the African Union Commission in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection of Ghana and the office of the First Lady of Ghana in order to zero in on adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and how to overcome the barriers to adolescent health education and services.



### **MOZAMBIQUE POST LAUNCH VISIT: 4 - 6 DECEMBER 2018**

The Commission undertook a post launch visit to the republic of Mozambique on the 4 - 6 December to further enhance the efforts being made at country level to combat child marriage and continue to bring meaningful change. This visit further accelerated a Pan-African movement to end child marriage and to protect the girl child’s human rights across the continent.

The visit involved meetings with relevant Government Ministries focussing on addressing the practice of child marriage as well as national collaborating partners including religious, traditional and community leaders and various civil society organizations in the fight to end child marriage.

## EVALUATION OF THE CAMPAIGN TO END CHILD MARRIAGE

In 2014, African Union (AU) Member States and partners came together to launch the African Union (AU) Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa. The AU Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa is now in its fifth year and has made impressive gains in advocating for the end of child marriage in the continent, from enhancing the normative framework to harnessing the political commitment of multiple countries. The campaign has the good will and enthusiasm of national, regional and global partners and donors, and has renewed determination to create results on the ground, where the hard work is needed and where positive changes will be felt in the lives of young girls.

The campaign has been hugely effective at bringing the issue of child marriage to the fore on the continent. However, it needs more focus – in terms of its conceptual framework, targeting of countries and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) – in order to drive the campaign forward.

### **Key strengths of the campaign thus far:**

- Member State engagement
- High-level advocacy and events
- Profile of child marriage raised within the AU
- Partner commitment
- Advancements in pan-African policy and normative framework
- National results
- Enhanced evidence-base

### **Areas where work is needed on the campaign:**

- The conceptual framework needs updating
- Monitoring and evaluation needs streamlining
- Targeting of Member States needs a strict focus
- A comprehensive campaign narrative is needed
- Partner engagement needs strengthening in the community

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF THE CAMPAIGN BEYOND 2019 - 2023

The AU Campaign has gained more momentum thanks to its advocacy events, trainings, country visits and other aforementioned key activities. These various activities have stirred an increased sense of urgency whereby more countries are now implementing concrete actions amongst others, by addressing the issues of this harmful practice in engaging different stakeholders and reinforcing legislation across society.

Despite the rising tide and awareness generated by this movement and Campaign, more has to be done for the achievement of the AU Campaign's continental mandate and main objective that is, to ensure an accelerated end of child marriage and harmful practices on the African continent. Therefore, its strategic focus beyond 2018, will be oriented towards consolidating the AU Campaign's coordination role in bringing together all key stakeholders, programmes and initiatives closer towards a common objective.

The campaign will be focussing on the following strategic areas of priority:

- **Strengthened Co-operation with Partners:** Building substantive collaboration with our partners through replicating and scaling up successful and innovative initiatives of the campaign's engagement with partners at the programme and policy levels
- **AU Interdepartmental cooperation:** The Department of Social Affairs works in collaboration with other AU departments of cross cutting issues such Gender Directorate, HRST- Youth Division, AU-CIEFFA, Department of Communications among others. This collaboration has been instrumental in working towards similar goals in line with the AU Agenda 2063 (10-year plan) and medium-term plan for results based planning.
- **Resource Mobilization:** Mobilizing resources is one of the fundamental components to the campaign's delivery and impact. Affirming that resource mobilization is central to the process and intertwined with programming, we need to strategize on how to pool resources to ensure the continuity of successful implementation of the campaign.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms:** Using the AU M&E framework, continued progress assessment and measurement of child marriage and education indicators with Member States should be necessary. Capacity building and ownership of this M&E progress assessment tool by key stakeholders, is crucial so as to continue better alignment to the AU African common position on ending Child marriage
- **Key and emerging projects and research work:** As the Campaign turns a new leaf, beginning from the year 2019, the AU Campaign will Develop research by the Campaign particularly in areas of child brides in conflict and humanitarian situations. The Campaign will also encourage education of girls affected by child marriage hence, leading to their empowerment. To this end, AU planned to initiate an annual scholarship program for advocacy and creating opportunity to girls to excel and later contribute the development of Africa. At the level of the AU, we will put in some funds into this project and also seek donor support particularly those supporting girls and women's education.

