



DRAFT COMMUNIQUE AT THE AU WORKING BREAKFAST MEETING ON ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE IN AFRICA

We, the Heads of State and Government and African First Ladies of the African Union (AU) at a working Breakfast meeting held at the African Union Commission headquarters on January 30, 2015 on accelerating efforts at ending child marriage in the context of the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa as well as the Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's agenda 2063.

At the meeting we highlighted our leadership role in taking concrete actions to bring to an end child marriage in all its forms and manifestations.

We took due cognizance of article 21(2) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, that *child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys shall be prohibited, and effective action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify the minimum age of marriage to be 18 years and to make registration of all marriages in an official registry compulsory;*

We also take due cognizance of article 5 of the Maputo Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, *on Elimination of Harmful Practices that states Parties shall prohibit and condemn all forms of harmful practices which negatively affect the human rights of women and which are contrary to recognized international standards. States Parties shall take all necessary legislative and other measures to eliminate such practices.*

Therefore, we commit ourselves to the following;

1. to launch the AUC Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa;
2. Develop, elaborate, and implement national strategies and action plans that aim to end child marriage;
3. Harmonize marriage laws by setting the marriage age at 18 years or above for both boys and girls;

4. Implement appropriate legislation and policies that effectively prohibit, prevent, punish and redresses child marriage including cross-border movement of girls for child marriage purposes;
5. Implement all key continental policies and legal instruments relating to human rights, gender equality, maternal and child health, and “harmful traditional practices” for the empowerment and participation of girls and women in development;
6. Promote the participation and role of men, particularly fathers, religious leaders and community leaders in combatting child marriage;
7. Commit to ensuring that the girl child is kept in school at least till the age of 18 years;
8. Promote gender equality within the families - between women and men and girls and boys – and promote and support the role of fathers and mothers as care givers;
9. Request the African Union Commission to include child marriage as an indicator for measuring progress towards Agenda 2063;
10. Ensure that child marriage remains high on the political agenda at continental, regional and national levels and in this context request the African Union Commission to develop an African Common Position to End Child Marriage in Africa.

Done in Addis Ababa on 30 January 2015

