

PRESS RELEASE

Burkina Faso Launches AU Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa



Dori, Burkina Faso, 03 March 2015 – “Ending child marriage requires multi sectorial platforms to create synergy between activities and to capitalize on results,” says His Excellency, Colonel Isaac Zida, Prime minister of Burkina Faso.

In his remarks, the Prime Minister noted that customary and formal legal systems may equally define and govern marriage; however, customary rules for determining maturity and readiness to marry have often promoted child marriage. Child marriage is a harmful practice and a violation of human rights that deprives girls of their rights to health, education, to live in security, and to choose if, when and whom to marry. He welcomed the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa and affirmed the commitment of the Government of Burkina Faso in ending child marriage.

“For girls to grow and contribute productively to the socio-economic development of their societies, Education must be prioritized and this must be backed by continuous advocacy and enlightenment campaigns within communities about the negative consequences of child marriage and other harmful practices which demean the girl child,” said the AUC Director of Social Affairs, Amb. Olawale Maiyegun. He also noted that child marriage under the African Children’s Charter, violates all four cardinal principles of child rights and a number of other rights protected under the Charter. The foundational ethos of the Charter is that a child occupies a unique and privileged position in the African society and is entitled to grow up in a family environment of happiness, love and understanding.

As a buildup to national launch of the campaign, a Town Hall Meeting of community, religious and traditional leaders was held on 2nd March 2015. The well attended Town Hall Meeting which witnessed a massive town out of citizens of from various communities was hosted by the Minister of Social Action and National Solidarity of the Republic of Burkina Faso, Honourable Mme Nicole YELEMOU ZAN, who did not fail in asserting that children (especially the girl child) must be protected and given the chance to grow and be well educated in order to become responsible and productive members of society.

Mme YELEMOU ZAN highlighted the Government of Burkina Faso’s commitment to addressing the harmful practice of child marriage its tenacity in ensuring that the perpetrators of child marriage are

brought to justice. She noted that ending child marriage is a collective effort and thanked the African Union Commission and all collaborating partners, especially UNICEF and Plan International for their effort and support to the Government of Burkina Faso towards ending child marriage. She concluded by also thanking religious and traditional leaders for their commitments to end child marriage in their respective communities.

About the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa

The campaign was launched at the continental level in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 29 May, 2014, during the Conference of Ministers of Social Development. It aims at ending child marriage by: (i) supporting legal and policy actions in the protection and promotion of human rights, (ii) mobilizing continental awareness of the negative socio-economic impact of child marriage, (iii) building social movement and social mobilization at the grassroots and national levels; and (iv) increasing the capacity of non-state actors to undertake evidence based policy advocacy including the role of youth leadership through new media technology, monitoring and evaluation among others.

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