



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

TOGETHER AGAINST THE MARRIAGE OF YOUNG GIRLS

Yaoundé, November 17, 2016 – The Confédération Africaine de Football (CAF) in partnership with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in Cameroon, African Union (AU), Powerplay and the Cameroon Football Federation (FECAFOOT) have jointly launched the “Together against the marriage of young girls” campaign towards abandoning child marriages on the continent. Statistics have shown that one in five girls (representing 20%) aged 15-19 in Cameroon is married, and globally, about 15 million young girls are forced into marriages before their 18th birthday. These early marriages have dramatic consequences on the girls’ health (complications relating to pregnancy and childbirth are the second leading causes of mortality in adolescent girls in the world) and also deprive these girls from their right to education, social integration and fulfilling their full potential.



During the Women’s Africa Cup of Nations Cameroon 2016, CAF in collaboration with the four partners, UNICEF, AU, Powerplay and FECAFOOT has thrown its weight towards the initiative carried out by the Government of Cameroon in the quest to end child marriages through advocacy activities that will be carried out before, during and after the matches.

This operation is also being supported by personalities from the world of sports and culture, who have participated in creating advocacy elements to appeal to and raise awareness about the problems posed by child marriage, and to propose concrete solutions to do away with it for good. For the AU, their campaign on ending child marriage in Africa delivers on its objectives, focusing on 3 main components: Advocacy and Social Mobilization; Facilitating Technical Assistance and Capacity Building and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning.

The AU Heads of State at their 2015 mid-year assembly also adopted a common position on ending child marriage and the campaign has been launched in 15 African countries with some going ahead in instituting national strategies and action plans on ending child marriages. Others have gone a step further in criminalizing child marriages such as in the Republic of Malawi, the Republic of Zimbabwe and the Islamic Republic of The Gambia. Powerplay, an initiative formally endorsed by the CAF Executive Committee on 28 October 2015 seeks to identifying potential for leadership and creating opportunities to practice those skills, Identify and nurture the potential for leadership in African girls and Hands-on leadership development through the Power Play online hub, through participating in the game, through the leadership summer schools.

These various activities and materials will be presented by UNICEF and CAF at a joint press conference on Thursday, 17 November 2016 at 4:00 pm at the Hilton Hotel in Yaoundé.

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About CAF

The Confédération Africaine de Football (CAF) is an international non-governmental organization and the football governing body in Africa. It is currently organizing 11 competitions amongst them the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) and the African Nations Championship (CHAN). CAF was founded in 1957 and has a membership of 54 National Associations. The headquarters is located in Cairo, Egypt. For more information: www.cafonline.com

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About African Union

The advent of the African Union (AU) can be described as an event of great magnitude in the institutional evolution of the continent. On 9.9.1999, the Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity issued a Declaration (the Sirte Declaration) calling for the establishment of an African Union, with a view, inter alia, to accelerating the process of integration in the continent to enable it play its rightful role in the global economy while addressing multifaceted social, economic and political problems compounded as they are by certain negative aspects of globalisation.

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About UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. UNICEF works in Cameroon since 1975.

UNICEF also partners with major sports events to promote children's rights through sport and its values. In addition to CAF, UNICEF has developed partnerships with major football teams as FC Barcelona and Manchester United. www.unicef.org

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About Powerplay

Power Play Africa is an initiative proposed by Isha Johansen, president of Sierra Leone Football Association in association with Memuna Forna, Campaign Consultant, and supported by Lydia Nsekera, FIFA Executive Committee member.

It is an Africa-wide empowerment and leadership through football programme for secondary school girls. The Power Play Africa Programme envisages using football to entertain, educate, and empower African secondary school girls, giving them the skills to help build assertiveness, leadership and self-esteem, as well as encourage an interest in participating in the game – both as players and as administrators.

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