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The Republic of Niger Launches AU Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa

Removing barriers and bottlenecks to law enforcement will help protect and promote the human rights of girls and women



Niamey, Niger, 12 December 2014 –

“We have come to the realization that our determination towards a holistic approach to the rapid socio-economic development would not be achieved if we continue to under-estimate the role of our girls and women,” says His Excellency, Mr. Albade Abouba, the Minister of State for the President.

“Undoubtedly, child marriage is a harmful practice which severely affects the rights of a child and further deprives the child from attaining other aspirations like education. Niger has one of the highest rates of child marriage in Africa. The statistics is not in any way pleasant and needless for me to continue to highlight the terrible effect it has, not just on the girl child but on the entire society and our fast developing country,” he said at the occasion to mark the official launch of the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in the Republic of Niger, on 10 December, 2014, at the Hotel Gaweye in Niamey, Niger.

The Minister reaffirmed his government’s unwavering commitment to working with the African Union Commission and other development partners in ensuring the end of child marriage in Niger through policy action in the protection and promotion of human rights – especially that of girls and women, by removing barriers and bottlenecks to law enforcement, and ensuring that girl are enrolled as well as stay in school beyond primary level.

“Changing of attitudes based on culture and traditions is not easy but with the right leadership and political will, stimulating the needed change to go beyond policies and laws, to

implementation involving stakeholders at the national and community levels will see our countries redefining the narrative of what is now seemingly referred to as the backward continent,” said the AUC Commissioner for Social Affairs, in a statement read on his behalf by Amb. Olawale Maiyegun. He informed of the African Union Commission’s commitment to its Member States in realizing their development agendas.

The AU Campaign to End Child Marriage launch in Niger represents a milestone event, not just for the country but for the continent where it is projected that if nothing is done in the next decade, 14.2 million girls under 18 years will be married every year, translating into 39,000 girls married each day. If this trend continues, the number of girls under 15 giving birth is expected to rise



from 2 million to 3 million by 2030, in Africa.

The event was attended by the African Union Director of Social Affairs, Amb. Olawale Maiyegun, the Mayor of Niamey, cabinet ministers, UN agencies, civil society organizations, and survivors of child marriage who shared their experiences after being married off as child brides. There were also musical performances and drama sketches on child marriage by school children.

As part of activities around the launch, the AUC Director of Social Affairs met with Her Excellency, the First Lady of Niger, Dr Malika Issoufou. Impressed that Niger was finally launching the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage, she committed that as a follow up to the launch of the campaign

in Niger, the Republic of Niger will host a conference to end child marriage with experts from countries with high prevalence of child marriage, partners and other key stakeholders from the 26th to 28th of November, 2015 for experience sharing and forging a way to accelerating an end to child marriage in Africa. She mentioned her continued support as a champion of the AU CARMMA campaign and expressed her gratitude to the African Union Commission for the support to the Ebola affected countries through the African Union Support to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA).

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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