



**Statement of the Commissioner for of Health, Humanitarian
Affairs and Social Development H.E. Amira Elfadil
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**On the occasion of the International Day of the Girl, 2021
“Theme: Digital Generation. Our Generation”**

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Africa joins the world today in marking the International Day of the Girl, 2021. As a global community, we are challenged on this day to reaffirm our commitment to chart a future for women and girls full of potential.

The African continent boasts one of the fastest growing youth populations globally, with estimates suggesting over 400 million girls will be of reproductive age by 2030. These should be positive demographic trends, particularly in the context of Africa's Transformative Agenda 2063 on "the Africa We Want". But as we have seen with the Corona virus COVID 19 pandemic, the challenges we face across Africa continue to disenfranchise the girl. And these include systemic challenges in delivering the right services and programmes to reach our people; policy challenges in articulating sustained, well-resourced actions to guarantee safe, fulfilling and resilient futures for our girls; and governance and accountability that ensure Africa delivers on the global ambitions for girls by 2030, and Africa's vision for 2063.

Girls across the continent are continuously vulnerable, while we have the right frameworks in place to change the status quo. Action for girls must be a priority we all champion. The African Union Commission is rising to this challenge, and we working to keep the girls' agenda at the forefront. With the AU Child Marriage Campaign, as well as the AU Saleema Initiative on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation, we are seeing that coordinated action at the continental level, while working closely with Member States, brings the right stakeholders and important partners resources to the table. And provides important opportunities for girls' voices to be an integral part of the response. The AU's Saleema Youth Victorious Ambassadors programme – a platform led by 6, young, dynamic young women and harmful practices survivors, puts this in practice.

Digital Generation. Our Generation. – the theme of this year's International Day of the Girl echoes the very challenge that we can all meet – to invest in our girls today. We need to invest in their futures by prioritizing skills, education and access to information and the world. The Girls Can Code Initiative the African Union Commission is implementing works to do just this – ensuring girls have the skills in often less represented subjects such as Mathematics and Sciences; that they have access to building blocks of modern technology and, contribute in expanding their future horizons.

And as part of the 3rd African Girls' Summit, taking place in Niamey, Niger from 16 to 18 November, the African Union Commission will be placing engagement of girls in innovation and technology at the centre of discussion. And provide opportunities for girls to showcase innovations they are deploying – particularly in digital technologies – to address the issues and challenges they are facing.

My message on this day is, let us all build on girls' resilience. Let us invest in girls' potential. Let us empower girls to take advantage of the opportunity this digital generation provides. And let us protect girls from the inequality, violence and harmful practices risking their future, and our future..