



PRESS RELEASE

The Republic of Cameroon Launches the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa on the Margins of the 2016 AFCON Women Football Competition



Yaoundé, Cameroon 18 November 2016—The Government of the Republic of Cameroon on Thursday 18 November 2016, launched its national campaign to End Child Marriage on the margins of the AFCON Women Championship under the theme, *together, against the marriage of young girls*. The Campaign was focused on taking advantage of the attention given to the football competition in galvanizing the fight to end child marriage across the country. The event was also an occasion for the African Union Commission in collaboration with CAF and , UNICEF to promote and advocate the ‘ *End Child Marriage*’ Campaign. Meanwhile, prior to the launching ceremony, a joint press conference was held on 17 November 2016 during which the different actors and partners

addressed the national and international journalists to mobilize continental engagement and awareness to End Child Marriage.

In her remarks, the Minister of Women Affairs and Family, H.E Mrs. Marie Thereze Abena Ondoua stressed on the importance for given by her country to the AFCON as a galvanizer of the different classes of people particularly the youths. She said the country is against any sort of violence against women and most especially against marriage of the girl child at very young ages. She highlighted the work undertaken by her ministry to promote education of the girl child and empower women in the country. (See complete speech of Minister Abena on the AU website: www.au.int)



On behalf of the Commission of the African Union, Mme Mariama Cisse, the Secretary of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, underscored the need for the national launch of the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage in Cameroon as it will help to translate into concrete response to the reality on the ground, relating to the situation of the girl child.

She called on all stakeholders to work towards ensuring that the commitments made at the launch are transformed into a national strategy and Action Plan, that will ensure that the Campaign

influences people living in communities affected by the harmful practice of child marriage with the view to improve the lives of the citizens.

Mrs. Cisse commended the Cameroonian government for launching this important campaign in the side-line of the ongoing Africa Cup of Nation Women Championship. “Cameroon is the 16th African Union Member country to launch the campaign” said the Mrs. Cisse while calling on other African countries to emulate this good example.

She underlined that this campaign will deliver the required change and relief for young girls and adolescents. (See complete speech of Mrs. Cisse on the AU website: www.au.int . The official launching of the end child marriage campaign ended with an exposition organised by the Canadian Embassy in Cameroon.

The African Union Commission and the Confederation of African Football have been collaborating since the 2012 in the promotion of key AU messages and Campaigns and through this partnership, both organizations have collaborated on efforts aimed at alleviating the suffering of victims of drought in the Horn of Africa; and promoting the Campaign against Ebola in 2014.



The launch of the AU Campaign in Cameroon remains unique as it furthers the standing partnership between the African Union Commission and UNICEF in the fight to end child marriage, with a fine twist of utilizing sports to advocate for an end to the harmful practice.

The Republic of Cameroon is the 16th African Nation to launch the AU Campaign, following from the launches in Ethiopia, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, DRC, Madagascar,

Uganda, Zimbabwe, Mali, Sudan, Ghana, Eritrea, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Senegal.

About the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa:



The AU Campaign to End Child Marriage was launched at the continental level in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 29 May, 2014, during the Conference of Ministers of Social Development. The Campaign is aimed at ending child marriage by means of supporting and advocating legal and policy actions in the protection and promotion of human rights; mobilizing continental awareness of the adverse socio-economic impact of child marriage; fostering social movement and social mobilization at the grassroots and national levels; and amplifying 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 - amongst others.

End ###

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