

## THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

Theme: “Change in a Generation”

DATES: 9 – 11 October, 2023

VENUE: Julius Nyerere International Conference Center,  
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

*Change in a Generation – the Dar es Salaam Outcome to Accelerate Action  
towards the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation*

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The African Union Member States, the International Community, the United Nations, International Organizations, Civil Society Organisations, Women and Girls, Young People, Religious and Traditional Leaders and other stakeholders convened in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania for the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Female Genital Mutilation from 9 to 11 October 2023, recognized the urgent need for renewed and accelerated action to eliminate this harmful practice across multi-sectoral and thematic considerations. The conference commits and conveys the following assessment and recommendations as a result of the 3 days of deliberations;
2. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a harmful, injurious practice that involves the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. A form of gender-based violence and human rights violation, FGM is still prevalent in more than thirty-one (31) countries globally, and particularly in at least twenty-nine (29) countries in Africa with prevalence data.

### II. PREAMBLE

3. **RECALLING** the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol); the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa; the AU Strategy on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment; the African Union Assembly Decisions: Assembly/AU/ Dec.865(XXXVI) to negotiate the AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AU CEVAWG); Assembly/AU/Dec. 737 (XXXII) on “Galvanizing Political Action for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation”; Assembly/AU/Dec.773(XXXIII) on “Ending Female Genital Mutilation”; the “Ouagadougou Call to Action on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation”; and “the Regional Inter-Ministerial Declaration to end Cross-Border FGM - (Mombasa Declaration, 2019)”;

4. **FURTHER RECALLING** the United Nations General Assembly resolutions 53/117 of 9 December 1998; 56/128 of 19 December 2001; 67/146 of 20 December 2012; 68/146 of 18 December 2013; 69/150 of 18 December 2014; 71/168 of 19 December 2016; 73/149 of 17 December 2018 and 75/160 of 16 December 2020; Commission on the Status of Women resolutions 51/2 of 9 March 2007; 52/2 of 7 March 2008/2 and 54/7 of 12 March 2010; and the Human Rights Council resolutions 27/22 of 26 September 2014; 32/21 of 1 July 2016; 38/6 of 2 July 2018; 44/16 of 17 July 2007 and 50/16 of 8 July 2022 and all relevant agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women;
5. **RECOGNIZING** that ending FGM stands as an indispensable milestone in our journey to accomplish the African Union Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly underscored in Aspiration 6 and Goal 5 on Gender Equality, Target 5.3 respectively, as well as in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ten Year Implementation Plan of the African Union Agenda 2063 Moonshot 6; aligned on the same outcome to “eliminate all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriages and FGM”;
6. **DEEPLY CONCERNED** that an alarming four (4) million girls remain at risk of undergoing FGM each year, a number projected to escalate to four million and six hundred (4,600,000) girls per year, culminating in a staggering 68 million girls by 2030 – of whom 50 million will be from Africa, given the high population growth rates in countries with high prevalence; and that 1 in 10 girls who undergo FGM are cut by health care providers in at least 6 African countries. Furthermore, 4.5 million girls have undergone FGM at the hands of a health care provider globally;
7. **NOTING** that while there has been an overall decline in the prevalence of FGM over the last three decades, progress remains uneven across nations. In some countries where FGM has become illegal, the practice has been pushed underground and across borders to avoid prosecution;
8. **ACKNOWLEDGING** that this harmful practice persists in many African countries, and that a health sector response is critical in expanding attention, monitoring, data and evidence generation, and action beyond a singular trend on FGM medicalisation that continues to be a growing concern;
9. **EMPHASIZING** the importance of raising awareness among health policy makers and professionals about the harmful effects of FGM and its medicalisation, and engaging deliberate, sector-wide measures that integrate data and evidence gathering, as well as clear policy guidelines to drive action, in addition to engaging with communities where FGM is practised to change attitudes towards the practice;
10. **CONCERNED** that cross-border FGM has emerged as a new trend that threatens the gains made in ending FGM, compounded further by the broader nexus with conflict, climate change and other humanitarian emergencies, including pandemics; and **NOTING** that only three countries across Africa have enacted laws criminalizing cross-border FGM, underlining the gravity of this issue;



**11. FURTHER EXPRESSING CONCERN** over the elevated prevalence of FGM in the border regions across East Africa, surpassing national averages and **ALARMED** that cross-border FGM has also afflicted countries in the West and Central Africa Region, with families crossing from neighbouring countries to subject their girls to this harmful practice.

We participants of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Female Genital Mutilation, representing African Union Member States, United Nations, International and Regional Organisations, Civil Society including Youth, Children and Women Organizations, Religious and Traditional Leaders, Young and Child Advocates **URGE** for urgent action, including policy, legislation, data, evidence, engagement of affected communities, leaders, as well as new investment and new partnerships to;

### Ending Cross-border FGM

- a) **CONDUCT** a comprehensive study that examines the population movement across the borders for the purposes of FGM with a particular focus on West and Central Africa, where data and evidence of this practice have been severely limited, with such a study being essential to gain a deeper understanding of the context, nature, and statistical aspects of this practice;
- b) **PROMOTE** regional cooperation, inter-country coordination and collaboration to curb FGM in border areas, recommending for the development of a continental model law and, harmonize laws and policies between States to help reduce the underground practice of cross-border FGM;
- c) **DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT** regional and national multi-sectoral action plans and strategies that includes all relevant stakeholders within border communities<sup>1</sup>;
- d) **ALLOCATE** sufficient human and financial resources to oversee the implementation of comprehensive and multi-sectoral regional, national, and subnational plans, strategies, policies, and programs to eliminate FGM;
- e) **CONDUCT** media campaigns to promote cross-border prevention among vulnerable border communities and introduce enhanced monitoring systems across borders for female genital mutilation cases;
- f) **STRENGTHEN** the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative disaggregated data, where appropriate, and collaborate with existing data collection systems including administrative data at both national and regional levels, considering the cross-border implications of female genital mutilation;

<sup>1</sup> International organizations, regional and international networks of parliamentarians, national human rights institutions, professional associations (including healthcare providers), civil society organizations (including human rights groups, women's human rights organizations, and youth-led organizations), as well as traditional and religious leaders and faith-based organizations, men and boys, parents, and family members, victims, and survivors

## Health Sector Response to FGM

- a) **ADOPT MEASURES AND POLICY GUIDELINES** to expand the role of the health sector in tracking and providing care, support and psycho-social services, and counselling on cases of FGM recorded through regular clinical and health care platforms;
- b) **RAISE AWARENESS** among health professionals on the broader social impact and harmful effects of FGM medicalisation, and **INTEGRATE** a health sector specific response in national action plans and mechanisms to expand its role, including monitoring, tracking, data and evidence gathering, as well as to provide training on identifying and reporting cases of FGM;
- c) **ENSURE** national responses to emergencies, including pandemics such as COVID 19, integrate the priorities, concerns and need for protection, support and engagement of girls and women to mitigate impact and sustain gains in national efforts;

## Consolidated Action; a multi-sectoral approach

- a) **EMPLOY** a multi-sectoral response to the humanitarian development peace nexus that includes the impact of climate change, conflict and health emergencies in the response to eliminate FGM;
- b) **ENSURE** and reinforce synergies among programmes and initiatives on getting to zero female genital mutilation and other harmful practices;
- c) **INTEGRATE** female genital mutilation elimination to accelerate durable declines in FGM prevalence, and work with all key stakeholders to scale evidence-based multi-sectoral interventions that prevent and respond to FGM, while strengthening preparedness and pivoting programming to changing humanitarian situations;
- d) **WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE** as generational change agents in affected communities, as well as opinion and traditional leaders to drive change and champion the transformation of negative gender norms that continue to perpetuate the disparities and inequalities fuelling the practice of FGM;
- e) **EXPAND** engagement of men and boys as allies and key actors in safeguarding, protecting and championing the protection and wellbeing of girls and women, and **INTENSIFY** interventions targeting men and boys in the traditional roles they play as leaders, parents and gate keepers of normative practices in efforts to accelerate the elimination of FGM;
- f) **INVEST** extensively on data and evidence generation that underpin and inform legislation, policy, guidelines, programmes and other investments within changing and challenging global circumstances affecting the response to eliminate harmful practices;



- g) **SUPPORT** a mass movement of Civil Society Organisations and Networks that can mobilize communities and lead campaigns to address key drivers and proven solutions that are working to bring about generational change to eliminate Female Genital Mutilation;
- h) **MOBILISE** communities, particularly where FGM is highly prevalent and leverage participatory governance structures to adopt and implement bylaws and guidelines for prevention, while engaging community, traditional and religious leaders, parents and excisors on reporting and tracking cases of, and disassociating all forms FGM from religious practice and doctrine, which ensures communities are responsive and integrate girls and women priorities in action at this level;
- i) **ENSURE** the endorsement of the draft African Union Accountability Framework on the Elimination of Harmful Practices, and **URGE** regional and continental human rights organs – including the African Commission for Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR), the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), the African Court on Human and People’s Rights, the Pan African Parliament, Regional Economic Communities and their Human Rights Organs – to translate framework outcomes into robust regional and national standards and guidelines, and enforcement of harmonized regional laws to eliminate FGM;
- j) **STRENGTHEN** country accountability mechanism that periodically report on the progress of the National Plans of Action and strategies and hold the government to account in delivering on legislative, policy and financial commitments and frameworks at the national and continental level on ending Female genital mutilation;
- k) **PRIORITISE** innovative financing and investment in programmes that aim to strengthen early warning and detection of at-risk girls for prevention and, education and programmes that build life skills, economic empowerment for girls as long-term sustainable solutions to eliminate female genital mutilation at the family and community level;
- l) **SUPPORT** the mandates of the African Union Champions on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation; Ending Child Marriage; Positive Masculinity; and Gender and Development Issues in Africa;
- m) **APPOINT** an African Union Goodwill Ambassador on Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation;



- n) **ENGAGE** on the #AfricaEducatesHer Campaign and the Dakar Declaration promoting girls and women's education and **FURTHER ENGAGE** on the AU Theme of the Year 2024 on Education by supporting Member States and other stakeholders to end FGM;
- o) **COMMIT** to increase and sustain funding for anti-FGM work and prioritise ending FGM in national budgets through direct and sector specific allocations including healthcare, education, legal affairs, law enforcement and community engagement.

**This outcome is a result of deliberations at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Female Genital Mutilation that took place in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania at the Julius Nyerere International Conference Center from 9 to 11 October, 2023.**

