

REGIONAL SUMMIT ON ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE YOUNG WOMEN'S SUMMIT JOINT COMMUNIQUE

Theme: Ending Child Marriage is Possible. Time for Action is now!

Presented after the Young Women's Summit on Ending Child Marriage held at Mulungushi International Conference Centre, Lusaka, October, 10 2019.

We the more than 100 young girls from Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe gathered at the Young Women's Regional Summit on Ending Child Marriage convened by Regional Advisory and Advocacy Group involving the Non-governmental Gender Organisations' Coordinating Council (NGOCC), Women Legal Resource Centre (WOLREC), Justice for Children, and Rozaria Memorial Trust at Mulungushi International Conference Centre on 10th October, 2019 under the theme "Ending Child Marriage is possible. Time for action is now."

Realising the importance of education to the development and wellbeing of the girl child and the need to end any form of inequality currently existing in the three countries. We the girl children require support that uplifts, protects and defends our rights.

We acknowledge the various efforts by our respective Governments, Civil Society Organisations and advocates to fight child marriage which is largely driven by high poverty levels, gender inequality, tradition, religion and limited educational opportunities for girls. We also support our Governments' policy and legal reforms to ending child marriage which deprives millions of us the girls of the future they deserve.

In view of the foregoing, we call upon the following stakeholders to play a key role in ending child marriage:

GOVERNMENT:

We demand that Governments of Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe:

- Facilitate access to free education up to tertiary level
- Harmonise the customary and statutory laws
- Domesticated and implement commitments made at regional, continental and global levels
- Actualise the rights to health, education and child protection
- Enhance provision of social protection mechanism for the girl child

- Develop and implement relevant legislation and policies on ending child marriage.
- Prioritise ending child marriage as a development agenda
- Address incidences of corruption in the public service
- Fast track courts to deal with issues surrounding child marriage
- Provide incentives to private sector players supporting measures to end child marriage

COOPERATING PARTNERS

We implore cooperating partners to:

- Provide funding to organisations committed to ending child marriage
- Continue to lobby Government for increased funding in key sectors that enable the young girls.

PRIVATE SECTOR

We urge the private sector to:

- Offer financial, goods and service support to girls and young mothers to continue in their education

- Initiate and support young women involved in entrepreneurship
- Complement Governments efforts towards ending child marriage

TRADITIONAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

We implore traditional leaders to:

- Enforce school attendance and to end child marriage in their chiefdoms.
- Spearhead the fight against Child Marriage.
- Implement change by coming up with by-laws in the Chiefdoms.

PARENTS

We call on parents to:

- Treat girl and boy children equally. A female child is not inferior to the male child.
- Create safe spaces for girl children
- Raise children with equal roles and responsibilities.
- Be role models to their children.

YOUNG PEOPLE

We urge the young people to:

- Focus on education (Education is an equaliser)
- Be the sisters' keeper