High-Level Political Event
‘Accelerating Investment to End Female Genital Mutilation’

Date: 22 March 2022
Time: 08:30 am – 10:00 am EST
Venue: Zoom

Contextual Background

It is true that progress has been made towards eliminating female genital mutilation (FGM), both in terms of opposition and actual reduction in the prevalence of the practice. In countries affected by FGM, 7 in 10 girls and women think the practice should end. Today, a girl is about one-third less likely to undergo FGM than 30 years ago. In the 31 countries with available data, FGM has dropped by climate change impacts food security, water and other resources shortages and even health of individuals. It additionally exacerbates gender disparities by increasing women and girls’ vulnerabilities to sexual violence, harmful practices among others. There is a recognized need for a global response and a need to assist developing countries to combat climate change. The Paris Agreement charts a new course by providing important building blocks for a coordinated global response to combat climate change with enhanced support systems to low-income countries. However, the climate story that rarely gets told is the tale of how climate change impacts the health of women and girls in marginalized communities in developing countries.

The CSW provides a unique opportunity for coalition-building with progressive organizations, and for influencing global policies on gender equality. In 2022, the CSW will consider the priority theme of “Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes”. The day provides the opportunity for governments, United Nations Agencies, Civil Society Organizations, development partners, activists, communities, and other relevant stakeholders to raise awareness, renew commitments and reiterate that female genital mutilation is an unacceptable harmful practice and a violation of women’s and girls’ human rights.

Efforts are underway to enhance regional level accountability mechanisms. There are several exemplary political commitments at the highest level of government in different countries resulting in a more enabling policy and legal environment. More and more communities are making public declarations to abandon the practice, and this is creating a
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resonance effect for community level initiatives. These initiatives are encouraging but more is needed to accelerate the momentum and put an end to the practice of FGM.

Estimates indicate that progress would need to be at least 10 times faster to meet the global target of eliminating FGM by 2030. The current level of global investment in programmes addressing FGM is below what is required to realize the global vision of eliminating the practice by 2030. A recent estimate by UNFPA indicates a $2.1 billion financial resource gap to eliminate FGM by 2030 in 31 priority countries. As a result, concrete and accelerated effort is needed within the framework of the decade of action towards meeting the SDG target by 2030. There is a need to facilitate a much more inclusive global movement and partnership at different levels.

It is with this background and context that the High-level Political Event on 22nd of March 2022 during the CSW66 under the theme of “Accelerating Investment to End Female Genital Mutilation” is proposed.

Goal and Objectives

As part of the side event, the High-Level Political Event will highlight the sustained leadership of Member States, civil society organizations, the private sector and the United Nations system to inspire a global movement to mobilize support in accelerating investment to end FGM.

Specific objectives include:

- Acknowledge the efforts and achievements made by stakeholders at different levels.
- Highlight the critical need for a global response to acceleration of efforts and increased investment towards FGM elimination, within the framework of the climate change.
- Share innovative models, approaches, and strategies to end FGM, including within the context of climate change.

Outcomes

- Political commitments are renewed to accelerate efforts to eliminate FGM addressing the impact of climate change on FGM.
- A call for movement building of partners working towards eliminating the practice of FGM is made and linked it with climate change efforts.
- To show the research/data to discuss new trends in relation to FGM, including looking at the linkages between climate change and FGM
Audience and format

The High-Level Political Event will be a multi-stakeholder event, to be convened as a side event during the CSW66 on 22 March 2022 virtually via the Zoom platform, involving high level representation from Member States, Governments, United Nation Agencies and more. The event will be conducted in English, French and Arabic.

Setting the Stage

Theme 1 - Emerging trends on FGM

Cross Border:

Cross-border FGM has emerged as a new trend that threatens the gains made towards ending FGM. According to findings from a report, commissioned by UNFPA in collaboration with UNICEF and the Kenya Anti-FGM Board to assess FGM among border communities. The report highlights that approximately 60 per cent of respondents from Ethiopia, 14 per cent from Somalia, 17 per cent from Tanzania and 71 per cent from Uganda travelled to Kenya to undergo FGM. Cross-border FGM needs to be addressed urgently, with the full commitment, if FGM is to be eliminated by 2030. At the 32nd African Union Heads of State and Government Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in February 2019, member states adopted the declaration “Galvanizing Political Commitment towards the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation in Africa” and endorsed an African Union continent-wide social marketing campaign dubbed the “Saleema initiative”. The launch of the Saleema initiative marked a critical juncture in efforts to accelerate the elimination of FGM in Africa. This initiative calls for political commitment to accelerate the abandonment of FGM, including the emerging trends in cross-border FGM. The new Decade of Action compels us to intensify our efforts to ensure that the global target of eliminating FGM by 2030 is achieved. The impact of climate change is worsening the situation on ending FGM and poses a tremendous threat to the gains made so far. As climate change have depleted resources for many families in East Africa, girls are more at risk of being subjected to FGM and consequently married off. In cross-border communities, families are sending their daughters across the borders to be mutilated and marry them off in exchange for dowry money.

Theme 2 - Innovative approach to end FGM, including in the context of climate change

Innovation:

As we intensify the campaign to eliminate FGM, we have embarked on using new innovative solutions to accelerate the elimination of FGM and ensure that women and girls most at risk have access to quality FGM services. UNFPA developed and launched an annual Youth Innovation Incubator on FGM – INNOHACK - and implemented it in partnership with WFP, the Joint Programme on FGM, the Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme (SIARP), UNFPA East and South Africa Regional Office, and the African Union. This initiative invites young people from the African continent to submit ideas
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ranging from digital, community interventions and financial innovations that will facilitate access to FGM services and change in social norms to accelerate the elimination of FGM practice.

Proposed list of speakers (to be confirmed)

- Ms, Amina Mohamed, DSG United Nations
- Dr Natalia Kanem, Executive Director, UNFPA
- Ms Catherine M. Russell, Executive Director, UNICEF

- H. E. Macky Sall, President of Senegal (TBC)
- H. E Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of Djibouti (TBC)
- H.E Minata Cessouma Samate, AU Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (TBC)
- Ms. Chido Cleopatra Mpemba, African Union Youth Envoy (confirmed)
- Her Excellency, Mme Siga Fatima JAGNE, ECOWAS Commissioner for Gender and Social Affairs
- Ms. Jutta Urpilainen, EU Commissioner for international partnership.
- Catherine Constantinides Miss Earth South Africa and co-founder of Generation Earth
- Ms Vanessa Nakate , Ugandan climate justice activist.
- Kenya/ Uganda Ministers to reflect on their commitments to end Cross Border FGM
- ESARO - Presentation of key findings from the cross border FGM research
- ESARO - evidence brief on the impact of climate change on HP
- Woman speaker (Indonesia / Kenya) - experience from Kenyan women in West Pokot - on the impact of CC on FGM.
- Winners of the INNOHACK- Burkina Faso or Nigeria
- Laetitia Ky- performer

NOTE: Run of show will be organized after confirmations from the speakers.