THE BANFGM COALITION

High Level Parallel Event

WORLDWIDE BAN OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION: FROM A DECISION OF THE AFRICAN UNION TO A UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION

27 February 2012, 18:15-19:45
Hardin Room (11th Floor), Church Center for the United Nations
777 UN Plaza (First Avenue at 44th Street), New York

56TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
A WORLDWIDE BAN ON FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Why a United Nations General Assembly Resolution?

A Resolution, in addition to being a worldwide ban on female genital mutilation and recognizing this practice as a violation of human rights, specifically the right to physical integrity, would also provide strong and clear support for all activists working to bring an end to the practice. Specifically, a General Assembly Resolution will:

- reinforce the legitimacy of laws already adopted;
- reinforce the importance of previous steps by United Nations, including the political weight of the Resolutions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW);
- reinforce the regional and international conventions that recognize FGM as a violation of human rights, for instance Article 5 of the Protocol to the Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa;
- give new impetus to efforts to improve national laws banning FGM where they exist, or to adopt one, where they do not;
- provide States with recommendations on elements for the adoption of effective national legislation;
- reinforce the efforts of anti-FGM activists at the national and regional level and provide legitimacy to those working towards the enactment of legislation in states where as of yet there is none;
- encourage the allocation of sufficient resources to the effective implementation of legislation and action plans aimed at eliminating female genital mutilation.
INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO BAN FGM WORLDWIDE

In July 2011, at the African Union Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, African Heads of State adopted a Decision in support of a Resolution banning female genital mutilation at the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Decision was evidence of the commitment to the issue on the part of States who have been at the forefront of the fight against FGM throughout Africa.

This historic moment provided a significant and concrete impetus to the International Campaign for a United Nations General Assembly Resolution to ban FGM Worldwide, which has been growing since a High-Level Conference in Ouagadougou in December 2009 held under the patronage of the First Lady of Burkina Faso, H.E. Mme Chantal Compaoré. Since that time, and with renewed dedication at the Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Dakar in April 2010, an ever-widening group of activists has focused increasingly on bringing the struggle against female genital mutilation to the United Nations General Assembly, which, by adopting a Resolution to Ban FGM worldwide, would provide the highest-level expression of political will to bring an end to this violation of human rights.

There has been significant progress since the African Union Decision taken in Malabo. Discussions at the African Union have intensified, as well as at the United Nations, where the African Group has taken an increasingly central role in advancing the Resolution. Burkina Faso, a country which has been at the forefront of efforts to end FGM and which spearheaded the process leading to the African Union Decision, has redoubled its efforts since the beginning of 2012. The release in January of this year of the United Nations Secretary General’s Report “Ending Female Genital Mutilation” was another significant step, providing an overview of issues the as well as bringing attention to the AU Decision and emphasizing the timeliness of the process now underway at the UN.

Advocacy has intensified, with celebrations for International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation (which has been observed since 2003 on 6 February throughout Africa as well as in many other countries worldwide), was “From Malabo to New York: We support a Resolution of the UNGA to Ban FGM Worldwide”.

On 1 July 2011, in Malabo, the Heads of States of the African Union adopt Decision 383 (XVII):

“CALLS UPON the United Nations (UN) General Assembly to adopt a Resolution at its Sixty-sixth session to ban female genital mutilation worldwide, by harmonizing the actions of Member States and providing recommendations and guidelines for the development and strengthening of regional and international legal instruments and national legislations”
CAMPAIGN MILESTONES 2011 – 2012

27 FEBRUARY 2012, NEW YORK
AT THE 56TH COMMISSION ON THE
STATUS OF WOMEN HIGH LEVEL
MEETING TO BANFGM WORLDWIDE

The BanFGM Coalition organizes a High Level Parallel Event “The worldwide ban on female genital mutilation: From the Decision of the African Union to a United Nations General Assembly Resolution”. The meeting is held at Ministerial level and is co-chaired by Mariam Lamizana for CIAF and by Emma Bonino for NPWJ, and is opened by Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN Women and closed by H.E. Chantal Compaoré, First Lady of Burkina Faso, Coordinator of the International Campaign to BanFGM Worldwide.

6 FEBRUARY 2012, AFRICAN CAPITALS
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ZERO
TOLERANCE TO FEMALE GENITAL
MUTILATION

The Zero Tolerance Day was dedicated to the Campaign “From the African Union to the United Nations: In support of a UN General Assembly Resolution banning FGM worldwide” in numerous countries, including Cote d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Uganda.

9 JANUARY 2012, DJIBOUTI
THE IGAD INTER-PARLIAMENTARY
UNION, DJIBOUTI

The IGAD Parliamentary Union adopted a formal decision “Calling for the prompt implementation of the Malabo Decision of the African Union by the African Group of States at the United Nations, so that the worldwide ban on can be realized as soon as possible”. The decision came after months of preparatory work by the BanFGM Coalition, including a formal hearing on 21 November 2011 in Addis-Ababa.

20 DECEMBER 2011, DAKAR
BANFGM EVENT

La Palabre and the Network of Parliamentarians for Population and Development organized a dinner meeting in Dakar, Senegal on 20 December 2011, to showcase the developments of the BanFGM Campaign since the Dakar Conference
of May 2010, and to encourage the Senegalese authorities to take a leading role in the process to adopt the Resolution at the 66th UNGA.

**SEPTEMBER/NOVEMBER 2011, ACCRA & ABIDJAN**

**STOCKTAKING CONFERENCE**

The Coalition to BanFGM Worldwide organized a two-part “Stocktaking Conference”, in September in Accra, Ghana, and in November in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire. The Accra session was organized in partnership with the Ghanaian Association for Women Welfare and brought together the main activists in the Coalition for an intense brainstorming session prior to the opening of the 66th General Assembly. The Abidjan session was organized in collaboration with the Ivorian Fondation Djigui – La Grande Esperance, and provided an opportunity to review progress and challenges, particularly following the months of direct advocacy since the opening of the 66th session of the UN General Assembly. The two-part Conference was successful in establishing priorities and identifying the next steps and enhance coordination to ensure maximum impact both in the respective capitals, reinforce the strategic connections among actors (decision-makers, NGOs, parliamentarians), with the objective of transferring the strong political will expressed in Africa towards moving forward on the adoption on an UNGA resolution in New York.

**15 SEPTEMBER 2011, NEW YORK**

**NGO BRIEFING AT FORMAL AFRICAN GROUP AMBASSADORS’ MEETING**

Following the adoption of the AU Decision in Malabo, the African Group at United Nations headquarters in NY invited members of the BanFGM Coalition to brief the African Group Ambassadors on female genital mutilation and the need for a worldwide ban on FGM through a UNGA Resolution.

**JUNE / JULY 2011, MALABO**

**17TH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT DECISION CALLING FOR A UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION TO BANFGM WORLDWIDE**

The African Union Summit marked a decisive moment in the Campaign, notably through the adoption of the AU Decision calling for a UN General Assembly Resolution to ban female genital mutilation worldwide. The BanFGM Coalition took part in the AU Summit in order to capitalise on the advocacy work done by its members in their respective capitals.
APRIL/MAY 2011, CONAKRY
BanFGM coalition received by
FOREIGN MINISTER AND FIRST LADY

On the occasion of the Sub-regional Workshop for religious leaders organized by the Inter-African Committee, the Coalition to BanFGM Worldwide travelled to Conakry, Guinea to meet with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the First Lady H.E. Mrs Condé, who pledged their support of a formal Decision by the African Union for a UN General Assembly FGM ban.

APRIL 2011, DAKAR
BanFGM campaign advocacy with foreign minister, minister for gender and MPs

The BanFGM Coalition met with the Minister of Gender and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal and numerous Members of Parliament who pledged their support of a formal Decision by the African Union for a UN General Assembly FGM ban.

MARCH 2011, OUAGADOUGOU
BanFGM campaign at the IPU and National Assembly hearing

The BanFGM Worldwide Coalition took part in an Inter-Parliamentary Union and Burkinabé National Assembly event on “Taking legislative action to end violence against women and girls”. The meeting, comprising Members of Parliament from across Central and West Africa was an occasion to reinforce political advocacy for a worldwide ban on FGM by parliaments. The BanFGM Campaign also received by H.E. Mrs Compaoré, First Lady of Burkina Faso, and Campaign Coordinator, who renewed her pledge for the Campaign for African Union Decision and for a worldwide ban on FGM by the UNGA.

28 FEBRUARY 2011, NEW YORK
55th session of the Commission on the Status of Women

The Coalition to Ban FGM Worldwide organized a breakfast meeting on 28 February 2011, under the patronage of the Burkina Faso mission in New York and H.E. Mrs Chantal Compaoré, First Lady of Burkina Faso. This meeting and discussion brought together European and African activists and representatives of civil society organizations together with Parliamentarians and representatives of governments to discuss strategies and the next steps to strengthen the BanFGM Campaign. The need to engage the African Union and the Malabo Strategy was the main outcome of the meeting.
6 FEBRUARY 2011, AFRICAN CAPITALS AND ROME
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ZERO TOLERANCE TO FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

On 6 February 2011, the multimedia Campaign “Decidi tu che segno lasciare” (“Choose what mark to leave”) was launched by No Peace Without Justice in Rome, Italy and—through a targeted internet campaign—by the BanFGM Coalition members across Africa and around the world, through the website www.banfgm.org with the participation of activists, members of parliament, government representatives and others

JANUARY 2011, ADDIS ABABA
16TH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT

The BanFGM Worldwide Coalition met with leaders and parliamentarians attending the 16th African Union Summit, sowing the seeds of the African Union engagement in the Campaign to BanFGM, which resulted a year later, in the historic Decision by the Malabo Summit to formally call on the United Nations General Assembly to adopt a Resolution to ban FGM worldwide.

General Assembly of the United Nations
The BanFgm campaign is grateful to many individuals, organizations and institutions that have generously provided advice, political and financial support, including the Italian Development Cooperation, the Open Society Institute, EnelCuore and Vorwerk Folletto.