BanFGM: TOWARDS THE ELIMINATION OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Accelerate Zero Tolerance to end FGM by 2030: Fostering the dialogue among local actors to strengthen the legal and political framework against FGM in The Gambia

Venue: Kanifing

Date: 21st February 2018

1. Context

In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution banning female genital mutilation worldwide (A/Res/67/146), which was renewed in December 2014 (A/Res/69/150). The historic step demonstrated the political will at the highest level to bring an end to this human rights violation. The UN General Assembly designated 6 February as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation. This day is observed to enhance awareness of the issue and to encourage concrete actions against the practice. "Sustainable Development” demands full human rights for all women and girls. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promises an end to this practice by 2030."

Within the framework of this project “BanFGM”: Towards the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation”, which is finance by the Italian International Cooperation, the partner No Peace Without Justice aim to strengthened and facilitate actions aimed at effective implementation of the law in selected countries in West Africa. As a result this proposal is focusing on celebrating Zero Tolerance Day to FGM to create visibility on the total Ban on FGM by the Government of the Gambia.

2. Objectives

In the wake of the passage of the law prohibiting FGM in the Gambia, this event aims to strengthen awareness-raising and advocacy activities to popularize it, spreading the information both on the universal ban on FGM and its implications at the local/national level as well as about the law. Wide knowledge about this law and its implications, among representatives of the government as well as the general public, is essential to ensure effective application. Additionally the zero tolerance day is linked to the regional momentum on the issue of FGM, in particular to underline to the authorities the importance of high lighting these significant new
developments in the Gambia, via their involvement in international and region-wide such as BanFGM regional Ministerial Consultation which took place in Dakar Senegal April 2016 and the BanFGM Conference on the worldwide ban on female genital mutilation held in Rome at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation on 30 January - 1 February 2017.

3. Expected results
A stronger BanFGM campaign is renewed among the anti-FGM activists and institutions including our partners Worldwide.

- Participants’ awareness is raised on the law banning FGM
- The informal network among different actors involved in combating FGM is strengthened;
- Participants are actively involved in building community consensus and supporting the application of the law;

4. Methodology
A day-long awareness activity will be conducted in Kanifing in the Greater Banjul Area to create awareness and discuss the contents of the Law banning FGM. Participants will comprise community based facilitators, some Ex-Circumcisers, Women leaders and Young people drawn from different organisations in the Gambia. The field coordinators will be informed to draw participants from the cluster communities in the seven administrative regions to identify participants.

GAMCOTRAP is also envisaging the participation of a representative of NPWJ on the Day which is mutually agreed to allow for effective participation implementation of this activity.

5. Partner organisation

5.1 GAMCOTRAP
As a women’s rights organization, GAMCOTRAP has engaged in a series of advocacy and community social mobilization creating awareness among the population about the effects of FGM on the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls in the Gambia. Through grassroots activism, the population has responded positively to protect girls from harmful practices, and FGM in particular.

FGM has been a subject of debate at both community and policy levels, and since the establishment of GAMCOTRAP, intensive community sensitization, dialogue and consensus building have been made by women’s rights organisations and institutions. These have included culturally responsive approaches such as the cluster Approach, which resonates with the lived realities of the practicing communities and ethnic groups. Adopting a law is a crucial step towards protecting the human rights of children, girls and women as enshrined in a number of international conventions and protocols to which the Gambia is party.

GAMCOTRAP has been supported over the years by various donors/partners to engage in constructive dialogue with National Assembly Members on FGM. Since May 2015, GAMCOTRAP, in partnership with No Peace Without Justice organised a consultation workshop for Community Leaders, Women Leaders, Circumcisers and Youth Leaders which resulted in a declaration by the participants calling for a law to ban the practice.

Significant progress has been made over the years in advocacy to end FGM. Advocacy at the community level has been led by the various chiefs of districts. As a result of the Cluster Approach, five public declarations in the Dropping of the Knife celebrations were conducted which included
158 FGM ex-practitioners (‘ex-circumcisers’) and 1015 communities in four regions of the Gambia (Greater Banjul Area, Upper River Region, Central River Region-North and South, and Lower River Region).

5.2 No Peace Without Justice
No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ) is an Italian non-governmental organization, founded in 1993 by Emma Bonino, former EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs and former Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Created to strengthen advocacy for the creation of the International Criminal Court in the early 1990s, NPWJ works for the protection and promotion of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and international justice. The action of NPWJ is structured around three themes’:
International criminal justice; Democracy in the Middle East region and North Africa region; Gender and Human Rights.
Since the early 2000s, NPWJ has been working toward the elimination of female genital mutilation (FGM) in Africa and around the world. To this end, December 2009, on the occasion of the High Level Conference organized in Ouagadougou, NPWJ launched the International Campaign “BanFGM” for UN General Assembly resolution banning FGM worldwide.