

ENDING CROSS BORDER FGM

1st Regional Inter-Ministerial Meeting to #EndCrossBorderFGM

Further to the commitments on “galvanizing political action towards the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation”, (Ouagadougou 2018) African Union Heads of State and Government Decision on “Galvanising Political Commitment Towards the Elimination Of Female Genital Mutilation in Africa”(Assembly/AU/DEC757(XXXII) both reaffirming the Maputo Plan of Action to advance rights and choices for women and girls, ministers and representatives from the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Republic of Kenya, Federal Republic of Somalia, United Republic of Tanzania and Republic of Uganda gathered in Mombasa, Kenya for a ministerial-level meeting hosted by the Government of Kenya to strengthen coordination and cooperation to eliminate Female Genital Mutilation and in particular the cross-border dimensions.



INTRODUCTION

In October 2018 at the International Conference to on Ending Female Genital Mutilation in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, representatives of Gender Ministries from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania together with UNFPA and UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation officially agreed to set up a tripartite initiative to End Cross border FGM in the region.

Based on the strategic importance and available evidence, the government of Kenya invited the governments of Ethiopia and Somalia to be part of this initiative. This is in line with the commitment made by the government of Kenya in its National Policy on Elimination of FGM to End Cross Border FGM.

The Declaration and Action Plan to End Cross-border FGM adopted at inaugural regional inter-ministerial meeting held on 17th April 2019 will be remembered as the day that 5 countries came together in a land mark meeting to declare an end to FGM, particularly cross border dimensions of FGM. Game changing joint actions were recommended for immediate implementation. The meeting, which is the first of its kind in the history of global efforts to eradicate FGM, put forward bold recommendations that reaffirmed the need for strong partnerships at all levels to end the harmful practice.

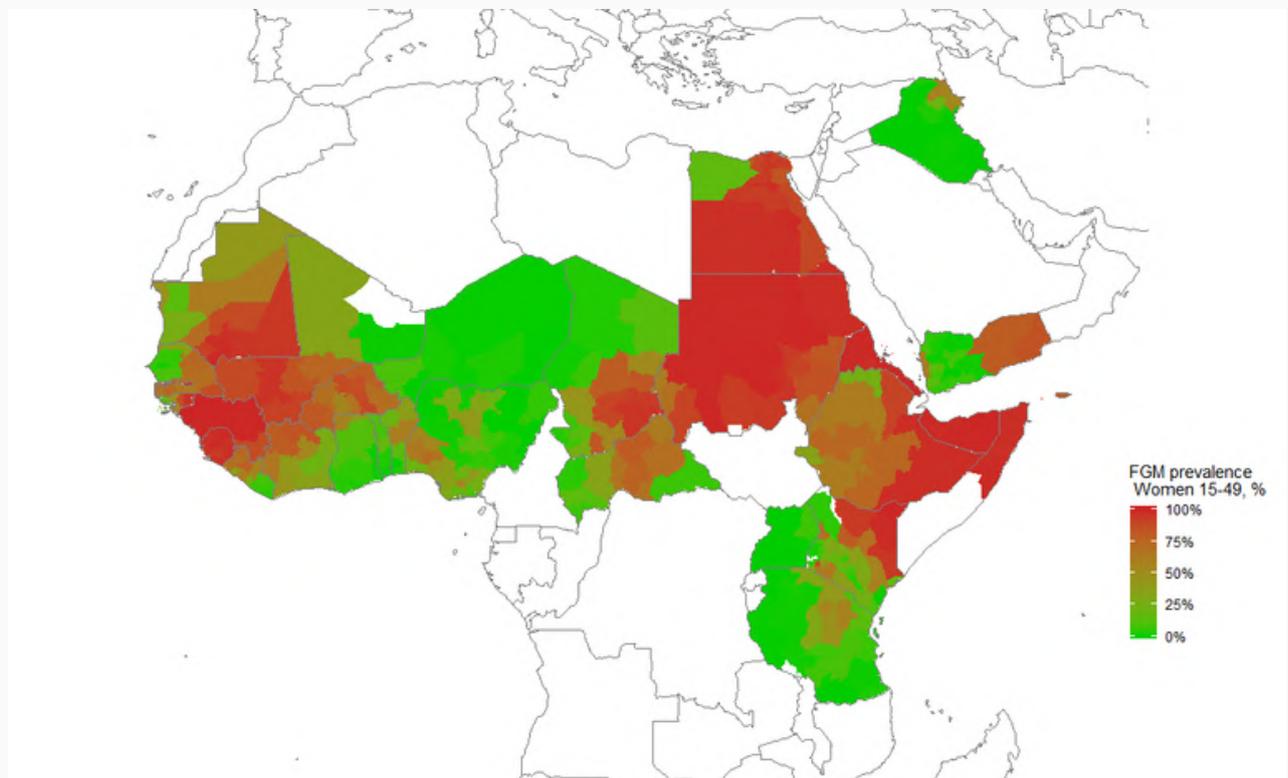
The meeting was convened by the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs Kenya, through the Anti-FGM Board Kenya in collaboration with UNFPA KENYA and UNICEF KENYA.



BACKGROUND

Female genital mutilation is one of the manifestations of gender based human rights violations and has adverse effects on women and girl's health, especially sexual and reproductive health, education and empowerment.

Globally, more than 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone Female Genital Mutilation including in 30 countries in Africa, and that Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Somalia account for almost a quarter (an estimated 48.5 million). Without concerted and accelerated actions, another 68 million girls are likely to undergo FGM by 2030 in these same countries making FGM a burden in the region.



Source: Latest available nationally representative household survey. <http://data.human data.org/>

In East and Horn of Africa, the prevalence of FGM among women aged 15–49 in Kenya is 21 percent, Somalia 98 per cent, Ethiopia 65 per cent, Tanzania 10 per cent, and Uganda at 0.3 per cent, but communities across borders often have higher prevalence. Ending FGM is a fundamental step towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Global commitment to eliminate all forms of FGM by 2030 is clearly stated under goal 5 on Gender Equality, target 5.3; “eliminate all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriages and female genital mutilation”. This should help to realize other SDGs that focus on good health and well-being, safe motherhood quality education, inclusive societies and economic growth.

Quotes of high-level attendees (Some of them marked in the next pages):

Dr. Ademola Olajide – Representative – UNFPA Kenya: “In Africa women and girls constitute 50% of the population and FGM remains a problem to Africa’s development and economic attainment. The discussions by the technical experts has developed a declaration and plan of action. UNFPA aims for zero tolerance for FGM. As UNFPA we appreciate the role of each delegation from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia and Ethiopia noting there is more work to be done and we remain committed”.

Anurita Bains – OIC Deputy Regional Director – UNICEF ESARO: “This meeting is the first of its kind and warmly welcome. These 5 countries account for one quarter of the global burden of FGM. The cross border aspects of FGM leads to the solution. Collective action will improve the lives of women and girls. Ending FGM by 2030 is part of the SDGs specifically goal 5. In 2008 UNICEF and UNFPA started the Joint Programme to End FGM many girls have received services and public declarations have been made. Prevalence rates of FGM is declining. This involved collaboration with religious leaders, women, girls, and community leaders. We should leave no girl behind. Africa’s demographic dividend will require investment in children especially girls. Youth demographics require programmes and initiatives for them on addressing FGM. Political will, scaled up advocacy and collaboration and policy are likewise required to bring about change



MAIN RESULTS OF THE MEETING

The Declaration and Action Plan from this Inter-ministerial Meeting marks the dawn of renewed joint efforts towards achieving the global goal of ending FGM by 2030.



THE PLAN OF ACTION

The Plan of Action has four results areas, emanating from the Regional Declaration, covering;

1. Improvement of legislative and policy frameworks and environment to end cross border female genital mutilation,
2. Effective and efficient coordination and collaboration among national governments to end female genital mutilation within their borders,
3. Communication and advocacy on cross border female genital mutilation prevention and response, and
4. National governments, academia and statistical offices have better capacity to generate and use evidence and data for addressing cross border female genital mutilation.



THE DECLARATION

Recognising the scale of female genital mutilation, and impact it has had globally and within the Eastern Africa countries participating in the Inter-Ministerial Meeting, the declaration reaffirms commitments under Africa's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda, through the declaration, commit to;

1. Strengthen regional coordination in the areas of policy and legislation (harmonising and implementation), communication and advocacy, evidence, research and data through regional economic communities including the East African Community (EAC) and the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD),
2. Support cross border cooperation by facilitating information exchange on trends and good practices, establishing Standard Operating Procedures for girls and women at risk, law enforcement, and community dialogues;
3. Develop and implement multi-sectoral costed Plans of Action at the national level, which integrate cross border dimensions on the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation with clear outcomes, targets, budget lines and monitoring framework;
4. Implement advocacy and communication programmes at the regional, national and community levels and mobilize stakeholders at all levels to take collective action, to accelerate the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation;
5. Generate and use evidence through research both at national and regional levels considering the cross-border implications of Female Genital Mutilation;
6. Allocate sufficient human and financial resources to the implementation of Female Genital Mutilation Plans of Action that integrate cross border dimensions;
7. Develop programmes to address emerging forms and trends of Female Genital Mutilation practice like medicalization, changes in age and types of Female Genital Mutilation practice, and religious misinterpretations;
8. Implement the regional action plan and convene rotational annual technical and biennial ministerial meetings to assess progress and promote mutual accountability to eliminate Female Genital Mutilation.







Prof. Margaret Kobia, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs giving keynote speech.



Dr. Demola facilitating the negotiation of the Political Declaration and Commitment



The Somali Dep Minister Hon. Samra Ibrahim Omar



The Ugandan Minister Hon. Peace Regis Mutuuuzo speaking



Hon. Safina Kwekwe Tsungu - Principal Secretary, State Department of Gender Affairs closing the Experts meeting



Tanzania Ambassador to Kenya H.E Dr. Pindi Chana



Hon Rachel Shebesh - Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs.



Charlie Stuart, Charge d'Affairs a.i. Delegation of the European Union to Tanzania with Ambassador to Kenya H.E Dr. Pindi Chana

Notable Quotes.....

“FGM robs millions of young girls of their childhood, perpetuating the intergenerational cycle of poverty, and acting as a barrier to equitable, inclusive and sustainable development..... The Government of Tanzania is aware that working alone in eradicating FGM will not bring desired outcome since this harmful traditional practice crosses borders..... Therefore, the need to join efforts in fighting against FGM should be EAC countries common goal”

H.E Amb Dr. Pindi Chana – Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania to the Republic of Kenya.



“It is of great concern to note that trends of FGM are changing. The fear of prosecution is driving communities to move to neighbouring countries to avoid arrest and prosecution..... The global target of Eliminating FGM by 2030 will only be achieved with intensified efforts across the borders cooperation and partnership among all stakeholders is critical to ending FGM in the region and it requires a multidisciplinary and mult-stakeholder response. Coordination should be at the community, national, regional and international levels.

Prof. Margaret Kobia, Cabinet Secretary, Kenya Ministry Of Public Service Youth And Gender Affairs



“Challenges include the vice going underground with communities trying to outsmart the government. Responses have to be multi-sectoral and cross border with budgets. There is nothing that kills like silence..... Partners states should develop and implement programmes on FGM prevention and abandonment.....leveraging social dynamics towards FGM/C abandonment with the aim to achieve several key outputs including: enactment and enforcement of legislation against FGM/C; generating local commitment for FGM abandonment and collaboration on a common framework for action”

Hon. Peace Regis Mutuuuzo – Minister-Ministry of State for Gender and Culture – Uganda



“as decision makers, we are here to endorse and finalise the Anti FGM declaration ...on how we jointly battle with FGM in our region. We looked the issue of FGM from different angles and produce a living document. The final document of - the declaration will help all partners in an inclusive way to eliminate FGM in East Africa and IGAD countries”

Ms.Samra Omar Ibrahim.
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Women & Human Rights Development-FGS,
Somalia



GROUP PICTURE- EXPERT SESSIONS

