



## CAPACITY BUILDING SEMINAR FOR AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARIANS ON ADDRESSING CHILD, EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE (CEFM)

Parliament of Ghana  
March 2-3, 2016 | Accra, Ghana

### STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

*Guided* by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights (1966); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); as well as other relevant human rights instruments, including the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (1998); the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child (1999); and the African Youth Charter (2006);

*Taking note of* the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda, particularly Goal 5 to “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” and its target 5.3 to “Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation,” the Outcome Statement of the First African Girls’ Summit on Ending Child Marriage in Africa, and its Annex, and the African Union’s Campaign to End Child Marriage;

*Deeply concerned* that the practice of child, early and forced marriage is a violation of human rights impeding girls and women’s enjoyment of rights, including education, employment, political participation, health, sexual and reproductive health, and a life free from violence;

*And recognizing* that the elimination of this harmful practice is a prerequisite to more equal, peaceful and democratic societies, as well as for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and the African Union Agenda 2063, We, Parliamentarians from Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, meeting in Accra, Ghana on this day, declare and commit to:

1. Encourage the launch of national campaigns and the development of national action plans to end child, early and forced marriage and collaborate with the relevant Ministry or Ministries responsible for the development and implementation of national strategies and programs to end this harmful practice by, among other actions, amending obsolete legislation and increasing budgetary allocations.

In this regard, we commend our host, Ghana, for the recent launch of its National Campaign and the Parliament’s commitment to engage with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in the development process of the National Strategic Framework to End Child Marriage.

2. Review current legislation on children, women and family matters with a view to harmonizing it in accordance with international human rights obligations and to eliminate all discriminatory laws that penalize girls and impede women’s access to equal rights.

3. Adopt legislation that sets the minimum age of marriage at 18, and that effectively prohibits, prevents and punishes the practice of child, early and forced marriage, giving redress to the victims as well as protecting those girls already married;
4. In line with our oversight prerogative and our countries' pledges to implement the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030, monitor the progress towards the achievement of Goal 5 and Target 5.3 by calling on Ministries to collect, analyze, disseminate and use age- and sex-disaggregated data on child, early and forced marriage and to periodically brief Parliament and appropriate Parliamentary Committees on this matter;
5. Involve more Parliamentarians and engage in dialogue and strengthen our partnerships with civil society organizations, traditional and religious leaders, National Human Rights Institutions, relevant Ministries and the media to foster an effective and coordinated multi-stakeholder approach to address child, early and forced marriage nationally.<sup>1</sup> At the regional level, utilize PGA's network to consolidate a parliamentary alliance that facilitates the exchange and dissemination of good practices and evidence on effective policies and programs to end child, early and forced marriage.

*Done on this 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2016, in Accra, Ghana.*

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<sup>1</sup> In addition, PGA will engage in institutional dialogue with representatives of the Judiciary, as appropriate.