



DRAFT DECISION

HIGH LEVEL EVENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN COMMON POSITION ON ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

We, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) at a working Breakfast meeting held at the Commission of the African Union headquarters on January 31, 2016 on accelerating the Implementation of the Common African Position (CAP) on Ending Child Marriage in Africa, in the context of the AU Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa as well as the 2017 AU Year on Harnessing Africa's Demographic Dividend through Investment in Youth.

HIGHLIGHTING our leadership role in taking concrete actions to end child marriage in all its forms and manifestations, with firm commitment to article 21(2) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, that *child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys shall be prohibited, and effective action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify the minimum age of marriage to be 18 years and to make registration of all marriages in an official registry compulsory;*

APPLAUD all Member States of the African Union that have launched the AU Campaign on Ending Child Marriage as well as those that now have national strategies and action plans towards ending child marriage and **CALLS** on Member States who have not done so, to do likewise;

APPRECIATE the stewardship of the Republic of Zambia, the Organisation of African First Ladies and the special roles of the AU Goodwill Ambassador and Special Rapporteur, in the fight to end child marriage in Africa and across the globe;

COGNISANCE of the fact, that child marriage is a multi-faceted, social-cultural and endemic harmful practice in most parts of Africa which adversely impacts the personal development and future opportunities, health and wellbeing of children, with detrimental consequences on children, women, families, communities and nations at large;

RECOGNIZE that all children, both girls and boys have fundamental human rights, especially the right to non-discrimination, survival, development, education, health and welfare, and freedom to take advantage of opportunities available in harnessing their potential; and that child marriage is a serious violation of these rights;

RECALLING our decision **Assembly/AU/Decl.1(XXV)**, which endorses the Common African Position on Ending Child Marriage, thus **REAFFIRMING** our commitment towards the Implementation of the Common African Position on Ending Child Marriage in Africa;

Hereby declare as follows;

- 1. RE-AFFIRM** our collective commitment towards the implementation of the Common African Position on Ending Child Marriage;

2. **ALSO RE-COMMIT** to keeping the fight to end child marriage in Africa, high on national, regional and continental agendas; and to submit yearly reports to the AU Assembly of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework on ending child marriage to ensure accountability for results and targets being reached;
3. **DECIDE** that a key event at the subsequent yearly January Assemblies of AU Heads of State and Government be dedicated to updating on the status of the implementation of the Common African Position on Ending Child Marriage in Africa, for as long as the practice persists;
4. **Request** the Commission of the African Union to pursue concrete steps towards the establishment of a High Level Monitoring and Follow-up Panel/Forum on the Implementation of this decision.

Done in Addis Ababa on 31 January 2016

