

Commemorating the 10 years of Brufut's declaration

III International Forum on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting 5-6th February 2019

BRUFUT DECLARATION - 2019

We, participants at the III International Forum on FGM/C held in Brufut, The Gambia on 5-6th February 2019, have come together to explore strategies, share experiences, success stories and good practices in efforts to promote the abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FMG/C).

Expressing our sincere and deep gratitude to Wassu Gambia Kafo, the Wassu Foundation and the Universitat Autònoma of Barcelona (UAB) in Spain for organizing this Forum sponsored by The European Union and the Catalan Agency for Cooperation for Development and UNFPA, and to the Government of The Gambia, for supporting this initiative.

Recognizing that:

- a) Great advances have been made during these 10 years, since the first Forum and the Brufut Declaration in 2009. such as the introduction of FGM/C in the academic curriculum in all the Health Sciences Schools in The Gambia; the design and implementation of the National Training Program for health professionals; the training on FGM/C to National Assembly Members, Judges, Magistrates and Law Makers and sensitizations at community level.
- b) New actors, who need to be trained and sensitized on FGM/C, have emerged, such as men, youth, judges, magistrates, politicians and social workers, among others.
- c) The new law that bans FGM/C in The Gambia since 2015 declares FGM/C as a public health problem and legitimizes the work of the organizations working for the prevention and care of the practice.
- d) The secrecy of the practice, going underground at early ages as well as medicalization, is one of the collateral effects of the implementation of the law, which can cause serious difficulties in the research of social and cultural dynamics, creating a gap between prevention activities and the reality of the practice.

Agreeing that:

- a) FGM/C is a global issue, and that, as a result, the movement of several decades to end FGM/C has become increasingly active both in Africa and in the African diaspora.
- b) FGM/C significantly erodes the human rights and dignity of women and girls and adversely affects prospects for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that require multi-sectoral strategies.
- c) Religion is often misinterpreted to sustain FGM/C.
- d) Organizations and stakeholders working to end FGM/C still face many challenges and constraints.
- e) Quality and adequate scientific knowledge is essential to policy formulation and its application.

Urge that:

- a) Civil society and governments initiate and/or strengthen community initiatives with an educational and human rights foundation, in an effort to explore alternatives to FGM/C and with a commitment to avoid stigmatizing the uncircumcised women and girls within communities, as well as migrant groups in general.
- b) All those involved in the prevention and attention of FGM/C support the creation of strategies and tools to enforce the law that bans FGM/C in The Gambia.
- c) Informed religious scholars be engaged in the movement to end FGM/C.
- d) Universities provide intellectual leadership to promote research on the abandonment of FGM/C and related issues.
- e) Policy makers and funding institutions base their decisions on the conclusions of sound scientific knowledge and support ending FGM/C by fostering policies and projects for the well-being of women and girls, with a specific mention and attention to HTPs and FGM/C.
- f) All those involved foster closer cooperation between the diaspora and home countries, by building networks and coalitions based on a non-confrontational approach and focusing on prevention strategies to enable real personal and collective commitment to change, rather than interventions that create dependence.

Finally, **The Brufut Declaration** emphasizes that:

1. Information is power, and people should be empowered by providing them information.
2. Health, education, social services professionals as well as community mediators and facilitators play a crucial role in the movement for abandonment of FGM/C, and should be so engaged.
3. Governments, development partners and other funding institutions must increase budgetary allocations and funding for efforts to end FGM/C.

Brufut, The Gambia, February 6th, 2019

