

International Forum on Harmful Traditional Practices

BRUFUT DECLARATION

We, participants at the International Forum on Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) held in Brufut, The Gambia, from 5 to 7 May, 2009, have come together to explore strategies and good practices in efforts to promote the abandonment of harmful traditional practices, and in particular, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C),

Expressing our sincere and deep gratitude to Wassu Gambia Kafo and the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) in Spain for organizing this conference sponsored by Foundation “la Caixa”, and to the Government of The Gambia, for supporting this initiative

Agreeing that:

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

Urge that:

- a) Informed religious scholars be engaged in the movement to end FGM/C and other HTPs
- b) Universities provide intellectual leadership to promote research on the abandonment of FGM/C and related issues
- c) 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
- d) 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 (e.g. initiation without mutilation, where appropriate) and with a commitment to avoid stigmatizing the uncircumcised within communities, as well as migrant groups in general
- a) 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:

Information is power, and people should be empowered by providing them information

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

Governments, development partners and other funding institutions must increase budgetary allocations and funding for efforts to end FGM/C and other HTPs

Brufut, The Gambia, May 7th, 2009



Ministry of Health
and Social Welfare
Republic of The Gambia

University of
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Collaborators: Gambia Family Planning Assoc, Gamcotrap, Tostan, Bafrow and APGWE.

