

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

Paix-Travail-Patrie

MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES SOCIALES

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Peace-Work-Fatherland

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS

**COMMEMORATION OF THE 32ND EDITION OF THE DAY
OF THE AFRICAN CHILD IN CAMEROON**

**Theme: «Elimination of harmful practices affecting children:
Progress on policy and practices since 2013»**

**DECLARATION OF MADAM
PAULINE IRENE NGUENE,
MINISTER OF SOCIAL DES AFFAIRS**

Yaounde, June 16, 2022

➤ **Women and men of the media;**

Let me thank you for your positive response to our invitation on this day when Cameroon is joining the international community to commemorate the 32nd edition of the Day of the African Child under the theme: «Elimination of harmful practices affecting children: Progress on policy and practices since 2013».

Through the decision to commemorate the 32nd edition of the Day of the African Child under a theme that has been discussed in 2013 notably **harmful practices affecting children**, the African Union intended to highlight two major preoccupations, namely:

- The value and importance of socio-cultural realities in the establishment of the personality of any individual and hence the necessity not to take it lightly and not to neglect it;
- The harmful impact that some practices with socio-cultural connotation can have on the development and well-being of any child.

It is therefore not an issue, as some may like to think, to engage conflict between socio-cultural values and the realities of the modern world. On the contrary, it is to demonstrate how «a healthy socio-cultural established environment» can contribute to the emergence of an African Youth who is bearer of hope and positive values.

➤ **Ladies and gentlemen;**

On June 16 each year, the world is recalling the massacre of hundreds of children by the Apartheid Regime in force in Soweto in South Africa. These children were claiming for one of their simple but capital rights; the right to quality education!

This background should not be an occasion to renew the pain in the hearts of parents. This is rather an ideal occasion for african states to discuss about the well-being of their children, the future of the continent, pause to assess one or many situations relating to the failure to comply with the rights of the child in order that appropriate measures be taken to tackle them and further ensure the social protection, harmonious development, fulfilment and the well-being of our children.

➤ **Ladies and gentlemen;**

Loyal to the inclusion and social justice policy so dear to the **President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA**, Cameroon has always placed the social protection of the Child as a major priority of its social policy by ratifying the quasi-totality of legal instruments related to it and also by putting in place an appreciable legal, institutional and strategic framework.

All the same, with the emergence of new tension sites nationally and internationally, children are not exempted. New social challenges await us. The promotion and protection of the rights of the Child remain as such a long term manoeuvre, that involves the entire social welfare corps and that does not allow us to rest on our laurels, however bright they maybe.

➤ **Ladies and gentlemen;**

No matter the point of view, some socio-cultural practices stand as danger for the harmonious development and fulfilment of the Child. For illustration:

- Early and premature marriages: The fragile body is submitted to the harsh reality of the life of housewife, the exigency of maternity and the pressure of community life. All these can affect the person physically, physiologically or psychologically;
- Child labour: Also included are the worst forms of child labour.
- Violences: These come in various shades : physical, psychological or moral scars.

- **Dear children,**

At this moment where you are being celebrated everywhere in the continent, your responsibility remains not to expose yourselves or to endeavour to escape from the different forms of harmful practices that may affect all your existence. It is in this light that I ask you to learn to say NO!

- NO to be lured to easy success;
- NO to the appeals of social networks with unknown contents;
- NO to keep bad companies;
- NO to use violence as the only solution to handle problems;
- NO to blind embrace of imported and imposed models from abroad.

To every African and Cameroonian Child, I wish you once more a happy feast day.

- ❖ **Long live the superior interest of the child !**
- ❖ **Long live the Day of the African Child !**

Thank you for your kind attention. /-