

## **GERMAN CONTRIBUTION: Implementation of UN-Resolutions:**

### **Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation(A/RES/73/149)**

1. Measures for the elimination of female genital mutilation, as per resolution 73/149, including:
  - i. Most recent data on FGM prevalence, including, if available, among immigrant and refugee populations, and information on root causes and factors contributing to the practice.
  - ii. Measures taken to protect women and girls from FGM, including when the practice occurs outside the country of residence.
  - iii. The role of stakeholders in eliminating the practice of FGM, including of: traditional leaders; faith-based and religious institutions; families and communities; youth; men and boys; grassroots and women's organizations; as well as health sector workers, particularly their ability to prevent FGM, including medicalization, and manage FGM complications.

### **In Germany:**

The German Government hosts an interdisciplinary working Group (consisting of the federal government, the regional governments, NGOs, and the German Medical Board once a year. Its work is based on the communication from the EU Commission to the European Parliament and the Council "Towards the elimination of female genital mutilation". The task of the working group is to keep on top of current developments, share best practices and develop a joined strategy to tackle the problem of female genital mutilation.

### **Data:**

The German government financed the gathering of data on women effected and girls threatened by FGM in the year of 2017 (almost 49 000 women were affected by FGM; between 1500 and 5700 girls were at risk). There will be up to date data by end of May 2020.

### **Education/ Curricula in the health sector:**

The knowledge and consideration of female genital mutilation has been included as a requirement in the examination regulations for midwives since the beginning of the year. Special training for refugees: The German government has financed a project to inform and teach refugees about judicial and health aspects on FGM –main focus on female refugees, but men were also included (2017/2018).

### **Criminal liability:**

Although female genital mutilation was already illegal in Germany, the 47th Act to Amend the German Criminal Code was introduced with effect as of 28th September 2013 in order to make the mutilation of female genital organs a separate offence (Section 226a of the Criminal Code).

### **Internationally:**

Preventing and combating all forms of VAWG, including FGM, is a central issue for the German government. The GAP II sets down combating FGM and the elimination of other harmful

practices such as child, early and forced marriage as strategic goals. Germany is committed to support the prevention of all harmful practices by taking on a holistic approach: the strengthening of state and civil society organizations as well as policy advice at national, regional and international levels go hand in hand with education, awareness raising and dialogue sessions. Dialogue sessions, such as generation dialogue or family dialogue are a method originally developed in 2001 with support from German development cooperation and have proven very successful to sensitize communities and thus prevent FGM. These dialogue approaches can take place inside one household or family as well as with religious, community and traditional leaders in one community. In places where traditional beliefs sustain practices such as FGM, dialogue formats can initiate processes of social change in keeping with communities' sense of identity and pride.

Since August 2018, the following measures have been implemented to prevent and overcome FGM:

- i. In 2019, Germany funded the project "Giving Voice to the Voiceless Women and Girls of Galmudug (Somalia)". The project aimed at training 20 stakeholders who in turn would train local women and girls in four community meetings who then would take part in the production of radio programs addressing education and employment, violence against women including female genital mutilation and underage marriage as well as political participation in order to raise public awareness for women's rights.
- ii. Germany launched a new project in February 2020 specifically addressing the prevention of FGM in Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia until August 2022 with a budget of 3.9 million EUR. The project follows a multi-stakeholder approach: It aims for the relevant actors at regional, national and local level to acquire new capacities for their awareness-raising work on the prevention of FGM and to use these to make an active and sustainable contribution to its prevention. Awareness raising activities, for instance using regional radio broadcasters, as well as generation dialogue and family dialogue sessions are planned. The programme will make targeted use of the efforts of the diaspora communities in Germany and the rest of Europe, since many migrant organizations have committed themselves to working to put an end to this harmful practice. Furthermore, the project will target circumcisers as change agents in FGM prevention efforts.
- iii. In cooperation with the EU, Germany is supporting a project on reproductive and family health in Guinea for 7 years (2015 -2022) with a budget of 24,4 million EUR. Part of the project is to increase the knowledge of health workers regarding the numerous complications of FGM. Furthermore, the project disseminates information throughout the country, reaching out to the population of remote rural villages and urban centres via television, newspapers, social media and community radio. It developed and published a video (Today in Guinea –We talk about FGM) which fosters societal dialogue on FGM.
- iv. In Burkina Faso a project on implementing child rights has, among others, the aim to overcome FGM through education. The project has facilitated around

1400 family dialogues on FGM, sensitizing families across the country. The project is running since 2015 until 2021 with a budget of 8 million EUR.

- v. Germany is supporting the NGOs World Vision and Islamic Relief in expanding the “Channels of Hope” approach and adapting it to the prevention of VAWG and FGM in Mali. The “Channels of Hope” approach is a faith-based methodology that mobilizes faith leaders, to prevent FGM. It was originally a Christian approach and has been adapted based on Islamic scripture and translated into French. Although FGM is not a prescribed practice of Islam or Christianity, religion remains an important factor. Thus, the inclusion of religious actors increases the impact, credibility and scope of these joint efforts. This interfaith cooperation runs from between December 2019 and December 2020 with a budget of 200.000 EUR.
- vi. German financial cooperation is currently implementing two projects in Sierra Leone on FGM, women’s rights and HIV/AIDS prevention with the overarching goal of improving the sexual and reproductive health and rights. The goal of the FGM component is to increase the proportion of mothers who do not intend to have their daughters undergo FGM (6 million EUR).

**Impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak in regard to FGM and measures undertaken to address those it in the short, medium and long-term, particularly in the following areas:**

- i. Potential new at-risk populations.
- ii. Delivery of essential support services for survivors.

We expect the Covid-19 outbreak to lead to an increase in FGM incidences worldwide, since the implementation of FGM prevention programs might be hindered or the effectiveness decreased. This is especially true for the aforementioned dialogue sessions, which cannot be carried out as normal with social distancing measures in place. Projects thus need to try to use other formats where possible to disseminate information on FGM. In Mali, for example, the project will host live radio programmes, record audio messages and create video courses to train faith-based leaders. According to UNFPA, it is additionally possible that economic uncertainty and school closures could cause an additional increase of FGM incidences. We will closely monitor this and adjust the projects accordingly if we find indication of this.