

REGIONAL ACTION PLAN ON ALBINISM IN AFRICA - 2017 to 2021

5-year plan to address attacks and related violations against persons with albinism in Sub Saharan Africa

“Leaving No One Behind. Starting with the Furthest Behind First”

UN Sustainable Development Goals [Agenda 2030]

Introduction

Since 2006, over 600 attacks and other violations against persons with albinism have been reported in 28 countries in the Africa region. Given the relatively small size of this people group, these numbers translate into a major threat to the right to life for many with albinism on the continent. Moreover, these numbers are reported cases alone. It is believed that many cases are not reported due to the involvement of family members and the absence of a monitoring mechanism. In an effort to combat these violations including stemming the root causes, the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of persons with albinism in collaboration with various AU mechanisms including the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, as well as other international development partners,¹ have contributed to the development of a regional action plan.

This plan consists of the recommendations made by various human rights bodies and mechanisms at the UN and AU levels which have been distilled into concrete and specific measures achievable over the immediate, short to medium term (0 to 5 years) while triggering long term initiatives (beyond five years). They are divided into four clusters: prevention, protection, accountability and equality and non-discrimination. There have been three consultations on these measures so far, all in 2016, whose goal was to determine, vet and prioritize measures. Another consultation is planned for 2017. States bear the prime responsibility of implementing these measures. However support and investment from international development partners are crucial for achieving the resources and technical support needed to execute them.

¹ The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP etc

Framework

The human rights violations faced by persons with albinism on the continent, intersects several key areas. As such, there are a number of opportunities that organizations for/of persons with albinism can utilize for implementing these measures.

First they can be integrated into pre-existing normative frameworks and programs such as on:

- Criminal justice and law enforcement reforms
- Public education strategies
- Disability *
- Colour or Racial discrimination
- Gender
- Development initiatives in particular :
 - The UN Sustainable Development Goals – Agenda 2030
 - Agenda 2063 of the African Union

*The Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities and the AU Draft Protocol on Disability are platforms to advance this cause. However, the attacks and killings of persons with albinism is an urgent human rights issue that requires urgent action. It is for this reason that we are advocating for a regional action plan which requires policy change and strategic implementation of specific measures including through all above-mentioned frameworks.

Implementation & Monitoring:

This plan is to be launched online to improve access and solicitation of support as well as for systematic monitoring of achievements and best practices by country to promote replication; identify implementation gaps; avoid duplication and to advance cooperation from a variety of stakeholders in context of SDG Goal 17: “Partnership for the Goals.”² In this regard, it will be crucial for national government to have a focal point on the issue to ensure effective and sustainable execution. This could be a focal point within an existing ministry or an inter-ministerial body.

²“Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.”

KEY

PWA: Persons with albinism; Stakeholders: every relevant group or body including state, civil society, national human rights institutions, region and international human rights and development mechanisms. “I”: Immediate term “S”: Short term = 1 to 2 years; “M:” Medium term = 3 to 5 years; “L:” Long term = immediate and on.

SPECIFIC MEASURES

Prevention measures

	<u>Priority area</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>	<u>Ideas on How / Comments</u>
1	Public education and awareness raising campaigns, sustained (and not ad hoc) for at least 2 years	All stakeholders	I to S	Demystify albinism through creative use of media. Involve faith based organizations and traditional healers, family members and Person with albinism. Appoint Person with albinism in high status roles. Replicate image of PWA in public materials. Use both traditional and social media. Train media personnel on the issue.
2	Data collection: disaggregated data and needs assessment (including security needs)	State	M to L	Census should allow people to choose “albinism” specifically from lists. Disability, Health and Education sectors can also proactively gather data.
3	Root causes – identify and address	State with support of other stakeholders with specialized knowledge and investigative techniques	I to M	Conduct research – legal, anthropological, academic and other

				forms - on root causes ³ and address them. Research should include cross border trafficking in body parts.
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Protection measures

	<u>Priority area</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>	<u>Ideas on How / Comments</u>
1	Effective law enforcement in response to attacks and violations against persons with albinism	State	I to M	Training and, resourcing all law enforcement personnel including border guards. Strengthening community based protection structures beginning with traditional authority. Reinforcement of structures of homes and living environment. Equip PWA with security tools.
2	Review legislative framework re: trafficking of body parts and witchcraft as well as traditional medicine and recognize “colour” as a ground of discrimination	State	I to L	Review criminal law framework for adequacy in response to attacks and violations against PwA. Encompass trafficking in body parts as high crime. Prevent witchcraft related crime. Regulate practice of traditional healers. Include colour as a prohibited ground of discrimination.
3	Health Care workers and midwife training	State & all stakeholders	I to M	Train on albinism and early intervention particularly linked to vision impairment

³ Root causes identified in report of UN Independent Expert include misbeliefs on albinism, witchcraft, weak law enforcement, gap in laws related trafficking in body parts as well as ambiguity in witchcraft and traditional medicine laws and practice. See ³ Report of the Independent Expert on Enjoyment of Human Rights by Persons with Albinism, Root causes of Attacks and Discrimination against Persons with Albinism - A preliminary Survey, 27 July 2016, A/71/41016.

				and skin cancer (including preventive and curative measures). Particular focus on women with albinism and mothers of children with albinism
4	Social welfare schemes should include PWA	State	I to L	Social welfare programs, legal aid, poverty alleviation programs etc
5	Monitoring and Reporting – support the work of civil society	State & all stakeholders	I to L	Support civil society with resources. Include them in all processes & programs relating to them. Allow civil society space

Accountability measures

	<u>Priority area</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>	<u>Ideas on How / Comments</u>
1	Combat impunity; Prioritize prosecution of cases of attacks	State	I to M	Train prosecutors & investigators through handbook (existing best practice). Issue sentencing guidelines, and assign cases to higher Courts. Resource prosecution, law enforcement and investigation officers. Appoint special prosecutor.
2	Victim support	State & all stakeholders	I to M	Psychosocial, medical, legal and socioeconomic support to rebuild the lives, for both victims, and surviving relatives. Should be available at community level

3	Re-integration of the displaced	State & all stakeholders	I to M	Process should be executed by team consisting of both community and international development agencies. Carry out security assessment and public education before reintegration. Act in the best interest of the child.
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Equality and non-discrimination measures

	<u>Priority area</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>	<u>Ideas on How / Comments</u>
1	Create post or officer on albinism in disability ministry or other human rights framework nationally	State	I to L	Officer can be housed in general department on disability, health, and/or marginalized/minority groups to ensure implementation of measures in this Plan among others
2	Vision: Reasonable accommodation (education and workplace)	State	I to L	Provide and ensure adaptive devices and vision support in class and workplace including copies of teachers/student notes as needed. Include PWA in disability policy and benefits.
3	Skin cancer : access to adequate health care	State	I to L	Provide system wide distribution of sun protection creams and provide cancer, and pre-cancer treatment at no cost. Reimburse cost if distance to care is far

				from residence. Ensure no standing in the sun for school, work or access to govt. services. Use mobile clinic (best practice).
4	Intersectionality principle should apply	State and all stakeholders	I to L	Address and incorporate intersecting issues relating to women, children and issues of discrimination based on colour

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