UMOJA NEWSLETTER

UNSG MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ZERO TOLERANCE AGAINST FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION



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HIGHLIGHTS

- The Uncertain Plight of the Girl Child
- Women supporting women through Knowledge Centres in Shinyanga
- Empowering Women in Kigoma Region through palm oil processing
- WFP hands over 40 Freight Wagons to TRC

Female genital mutilation is a terrible human rights violation that affects the health and well being of millions of women and girls around the world. Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the numbers of girls at risk of this horrific practice. Lockdowns and school closures have left girls highly vulnerable to harm of all kinds, and have hindered efforts to end harmful practices, including female genital mutilation.

Without urgent action, 2 million more girls could be at risk of female genital mutilation between now and 2030 — in addition to the 4 million girls already at risk each year. I urge all Governments, policy makers, civil society organizations and others to prioritize addressing female genital mutilation in their national COVID 19 responses. Female genital mutilation is both a form of gender-based violence and a child protection issue.

If we are to meet our global target of eliminating female genital mutilation by 2030, we need to increase the rate of progress tenfold. This will require some \$2.4 billion over the next decade. But the cost of inaction is far higher. Ending female genital mutilation is essential to ending violence of all kinds against women and girls and achieving gender equality.

On the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, we raise our voices to say: "Enough!"

We have no time to waste. Let's unite, fund and act to end female genital mutilation by 2030."

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THE UNCERTAIN PLIGHT OF THE GIRL CHILD

azingira FM is where Dinna Shambe's voice is heard. Supported by UNESCO to enhance her skills, she has become boldly passionate about her mission for change as a radio journalist in Bunda District, Mara Region. Dinna wakes up with one agenda on her mind every day, her voice filled with purpose to produce programmes that will help people in her community end violence. She worries about how Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) performed on girls continues to affect them, forcing some to run away to escape the cut.

Wankuru is one of the girls who was met with this fate, a young girl who ran to the local chairperson to seek refuge but was sent back by the same person she thought would protect her. Wakuru was told, "whether she likes it or not, she will follow their culture and traditions." She later ran to her father's friend, who agreed to help her. He educates the community against FGM and other harmful practices. Her father's friend immediately reported the case to the police and she was placed at a safe house, the Hope Mugumu, there she was received and her school fees paid for so she could continue with her education.

Dinna listens to many. Among them a vocal advocate against



Young reporters are building local radios as effective and responsive platforms for community dialogue, mobilization and active advocates of development issues including women's empowerment and access to justice. *Photo | UNESCO Tanzania*

gender-based violence, Fatma Mkurya, Fatma calls for a stop on this harmful practice. "The psychosocial effects of FGM on the girl child is far reaching from the time she is made aware of it to the time she is cut and after." This also has adverse effects on the child's confidence. Perpetrators should be held accountable for this so that the girl child is well protected.

The radio journalist meets the people who perform FGM locally known as 'ngaribas', "I spoke to a retired 'ngariba' who told me that in the past, in case the child died as a result of FGM, they would throw her in the river. The child is considered cursed and cannot be buried in the village." narrates Dinna. The work of a 'ngariba' is like that of a traditional healer, she reflects. In the end, the retired 'ngariba' decided to stop because it became too risky. She saw other 'ngaribas' arrested. Divine spiritual renewal made her stop.

"I also interviewed Kirioda Kigesa, a Mara resident who is a cultural elder who advocates against FGM and other harmful practices." Dinna narrated how Kirioda and his group educate and sensitize the community establishing peer groups against harmful practices.

Children are now more aware Continues on page 3

on where to seek help once their parents force them to go for the practice, Most run to the safe house in Mugumu, Serengeti. The Bunda social welfare officer, Ms Florence Kibogo urges parents and guardians to stop the FGM practice on girls being done secretly.

safe house, Ms Robhi Samuel, is another frontline campaigner against FGM and regular visitor to the radio. Like many, Robhi expresses her hope that the community will change and stop these harmful cultural beliefs tied to FGM. She believes that the more girls are made aware of the practice, the more they will change.

"The psychosocial effects of FGM on the girl child is far reaching from the time she is made aware of it to the time she is cut and after."

Fatma Mkurya, advocate against gender-based violence

The Director of Hope Mugumu

WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN THROUGH KNOWLEDGE CENTRES IN **SHINYANGA**



Women in Mailto village, Shinyanga, congregate at the Knowledge Centre and discuss how to tackle the challenges women and girls face in the community. Photo | UNFPA Tanzania

Little did she know that her life Region, she met women who She joined the women and

ilka visited the Knowl- was about to change for good. spoke up about Gender based edge Centre in her In the quiet dusty town of Mali- violence. village out of curiosity. to, Msalala District in Shinyanga

Continues on page 4

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learned about the different forms of gender-based violence. Shortly, she started sharing her own experiences. "I thought it was normal for my husband to sell the harvest that we had worked so hard together to produce. Many a time he would go into town and come back home with empty pockets several days later," says Milka. Loyce, another member tells a similar story.

Milka is now one of the lead mentors at the Knowledge Centre leading outreach activities. She educates and provides information on women and girls' rights.

Milka explains that the centre is a safe space for women to discuss issues affecting them. They discuss gender-based violence, harmful practices, gender equality, women's rights and the importance of eliminating discrimination against girls. The women also discuss their participation in leadership and political activities.

Loyce is also currently a member of the Ward Children and Women's Protection Committee. 7 wards and 25 village protection committees that have been set up in the Msalala district council of Shinyanga. Loyce received training to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. Also, on harmful practices like child marriage.

She now supports several mothers to reject marriage proposals for their daughters. In her view,

there is increasing understanding about the importance and rights of girls, like boys to get education.

The Centre opened in October 2020. Although it is still in its early days, both Loyce and Milka say that these are promising signs.

The Knowledge Centre in Malito is one of two established in Shinyanga Region. UN Women and UNFPA oversee the three-year project. Funding of this project is from Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The project is already advancing gender equality efforts. Rural women and girls in Ikungi District, Singida Region and Msasala, Shinyanga Region, are now included in development.

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN KIGOMA REGION THROUGH PALM OIL PROCESSING

Region have been cultivating palm oil for the production of edible oil since the early 1920s. To date, the small-scale, traditional production of palm oil has been handled almost entirely by women, individually or sometimes with the help of family members, using manual techniques. The women are in charge of boiling and milling of palm oil as well as in selling the product.

According to the Seed Change Annual Report (2015), the average small-scale farmer of oil palm in Tanzania makes less than US\$300 a year; struggles to meet nutritional needs for the family; does not have access to proper medical care, and has a primary school education at best while a typical smallholder's palm oil farmer in Indonesia with an area of less than two acres gets a net annual income of equivalent to USD 960.

The Kigoma region accounts for more than 70 percent of the palm oil produced in the country and has the potential to make Tanzania one of the world's leading producers and exporters of palm oil due to its suitable soil and weather. However, Tanzania imports almost half of its total edible oils despite having a vast and promising potential production of palm oil. Kigoma region has consecutively remained among the least developed region in terms of its per capital (GDP) over the last decade.

Through the UN's Kigoma Joint Programme (KJP), the International Trade Centre (ITC),

under the pillar of Youth and Women Economic Empower

ment (YWEE), has supported the construction of two small modernized factories for processing palm oil at Janda and Kinazi Wards, in Buhigwe District of Kigoma Region. The fist factory at Janda ward has been operational since July 2020.

The second factory was handed over to the Kinazi Women Entrepreneur Group on March 8, 2021by Mwanamvua Mrindoko, the Uvinza District Commissioner, on behalf of the Kigoma Regional Commissioner, during International Women's Day commemorations.

"I thank Kigoma Joint Pro-

"I thank Kigoma Joint Programme for empowering our women within the region and I strongly encourage all the women to continue demonstrating and expanding their entrepreneurship and partnership to achieve a better future for our children."

Fatma Mkurya, advocate against gender-based violence

gramme for empowering our women within the region and I strongly encourage all the women to continue demonstrating and expanding their entrepreneurship and partnership to achieve a better future for our children." Hon. Mwanamvua Mrindoko – Uvinza District Commissioner.

The factories can process up to eight times the traditional hand driven machines which were previously used by women groups in these wards. Before the construction of the factories in the Buhigwe District, these women had to either process palm oil manually or travelled (mostly by bicycles) to Kigoma Town, 60 kilometers, in order to process palm oil. The process of manually processing a ripen

palm fruit into palm oil took no



A photo of the Uvinza District Commissioner, Honourable Mwanamvua Mlindoko (right) hands over a small company for processing palm fruit into palm oil to the Kinazi Women Group, during the International Women's Day celebration. *Photo | UN Tanzania*

less than eight hours and was subjected to poor hygiene and environmental destruction due to high amount of fuel needed to get the job done (wood).

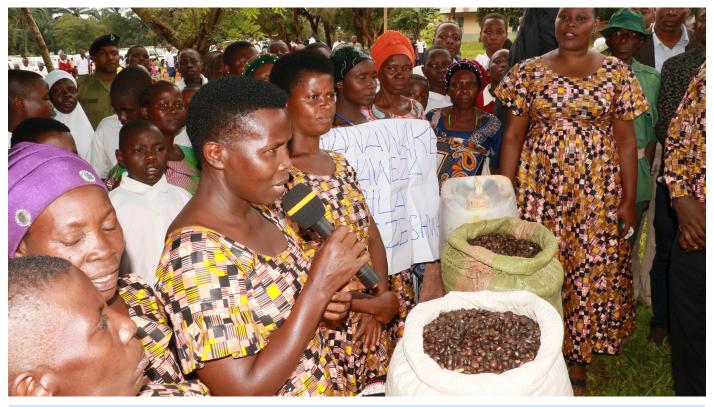
"before the construction of the factory, we would wake up very early in the morning and begin our journey. After countless hours we would travel back home very late and exhausted. Now that the factory is nearby, we can spend more time with our children and family." Benta Saunja – Chairperson of Kinazi Women Entrepreneur Group. The newly constructed factories have cut the production time to about 7 hours while reducing travel time and providing a hygienically better environment. Apart from processing palm oil, the factory is also used for producing palm kernel oil which is used for making soap.

'Indeed, before this factory the situation was very difficult because manual processing of oil is time consuming and the quality of oil produced was very poor. The process usually required ripening of the palm fruit for about two to three days. This was followed by peeling of the fruits then boiling for hours. The whole process took about three to four days' Teddy Mayaya, Extension Officer, Janda Ward.

Both factories directly benefit about 162 households and the total population of about 810 individuals. The overall objective of the YWEE pillar of the Kigoma Joint Programme is to increase income levels of women and youths in the region and thus contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



The Kinazi Women Group demonstrate and showcase their final products to the Uvinza District Commissioner, Honourable Mwanamvua Mlindoko (right) during the International Women's Day celebration in Kigoma Region. *Photo | UN Tanzania*



The Kinazi Women Group demonstrate and showcase their products during the International Women's Day celebration which took place in Uvinza District, Kigoma. *Photo | UN Tanzania*



A photo of the machines used for grinding palm fruit into powder. Photo | UN Tanzania

PLHIV IN ZANZIBAR ARE REMEMBERED IN COMBATING COVID-19

ore than 5000 people in Mtopepo community in Zanzibar received COVID-19 protective gear.

Four government health facilities received personal protective equipment (PPE), surgical masks and gloves.

At least 2000 people living with HIV in Zanzibar received soap and surface cleaning kits. 2000 more people in 480 households received the hygiene and protective packs. UNAIDS in collaboration with the Zanzibar Association of people living with HIV and AIDS (ZAPHA+ and Reckitt Benckiser Group of companies provided the hygiene packs. Volunteers from communities of people living with HIV were trained by ZAPHA+ and UNAIDS to distribute the hygiene supplies and provide COVID-19 information materials to the community.

The distribution conducted in consultation with Zanzibar AIDS Commission (ZAC), aims to fight the spread of COVID-19. Currently, there is no clear evidence that people living with HIV (PLHIV) are at an increased risk of acquiring COVID-19 or of becoming more ill from it. Many people living with HIV are ageing. Some also have underlying health conditions which make them vulnerable to severe COVID-19 disease.

UNAIDS continues to support the Associations of People living with HIV/AIDS.



(Left to Right): Dr. George Loy, (UNAIDS's Zanzibar focal point), Dr. Ahmed Khatib (ZAC Executive Director), Bi Hasina H. Shehe (ZAPHA+ Board Chair), Mr. Seif Abdalla (ZAPHA+ Executive Director) and Bi. Sara A. Mwita (ZAPHA+ National Chairperson) during a hygiene Packs handover event at ZAPHA+ Headquarter Quarter in Zanzibar. *Photo | UN Tanzania*

WHO BOOSTS ZANZIBAR RESPONSE TO COVID-19 WITH SUPPLIES



The Minister of Education in Zanzibar Mr. Simai Mohamed Said (middle, seated) received WHO donations of medical equipment on behalf of the Government of Zanzibar at Central Medical Store in Unguja. Dr. Ghirmay Andemichael (second left) handed the equipment at the occasion where MOH and WHO officials participated. *Photo* | *WHO Tanzania*

he World Health Organization has donated medical supplies over \$100,000 to support the fight against COVID-19 in Zanzibar.

The donation of medical supplies is a continuation of WHO's support to enable the Ministry of Health to prevent and respond to public health emergencies of international concern including COVID-19.

The donation was received by the Minister of Education and Vocational Training and acting Minister of Health, Honorable Simai Mohamed Said. In his statement, Simai praised WHO's continued technical, financial and material support to the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar reassuring that every donation will be used for the intended purpose to protect people and save lives.

The WHO Liaison Officer in Zanzibar, Dr. Ghirmay Andemichael says "This will also prevent health worker and patients/clients from getting infected with COVID-19 and improve quality of health care services in the health facilities"

The donation specifically consisted of equipment including face shields, googles, isolation gowns, respiratory masks, surgical masks, gloves, plastic aprons, parcels of plastic sheets and parcels of perimeter nets worth TZS 261.7 million (112,857.90 USD).

Six African countries have already reported of the new COVID-19 strain at the time of the donation. The emergence of the new strain known as 501YV2, has fueled the transmission of COVID-19. The virus has 70% more transmissibility compared to the old strain. More than 26 countries have already reported of the occurrence of the new strain.

Since March 2020, WHO has

deployed medical, laboratory and social scientists to respond to the pandemic and mobilized and donated medical equipment, supplies, build capacity of various cadres of health workers and paramedical staff to respond to the pandemic.

WHO has so far mobilized and donated more than TZS 2.1 billion (943,843.32) USD to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in the islands since the start of the pandemic. The donations were invested in medical equipment and supplies worth TZS 912 million. Investment worth TZS 546 million also done in capacity building of health workers, in laborato-

ry personnel and surveillance officers more than and more than TZS 707 million as direct Technical Assistance through deployment of experts in case management, infection prevention and control, surveillance, coordination, water and sanitation and risk communication and community engagement.

WHO also handed over 665,000 doses of Oral Cholera Vaccine worth 1.9 million USD which will be used in 33 hotspots (highly affected localities) where 316,292 populations in both Unguja and Pemba Islands will be targeted for the cholera vaccination. WHO as Secretariat to Member States, performs monitoring and reporting duties entrusted to it by the World Health Assembly. It also supports monitoring an implementation 0f the International Health Regulations.

"This will also prevent health worker and patients/clients from getting infected with COVID-19 and improve quality of health care services in the health facilities"

Dr. Ghirmay Andemichael, WHO Liaison Officer in Zanzibar

Dr. Andemichael reiterated that

LEAVING WOMEN OUT OF PEACE PROCESSES A BLIND AND COSTLY DECISION

cold sweat broke out on Major Justina Gessine's forehead as she went through the essential items recently donated by Her Highness Sheikah Fatima Bint Mubarak of the United Arab Emirates to Tanzanian women in international peacekeeping. As she mopped the sweat with her forearm, she explained the items had swept her back to 2016 when she was on a United Nations Peacekeeping mission in the Dafur region of Sudan, as second-in command in the Tanzanian Battalion.

"It was not easy to get items such as sanitary towels, because supplies were erratic in the war-torn region. While we received some provisions from the Tanzanian Defense Forces, the demand was very high, mainly due to the harsh weather conditions," said Major Gessine.

She was speaking just after the end of the ceremony recently held to handover the items to the women on international peacekeeping missions, at the Peacekeeping Training Centre in Dar es Salaam.

The commodities were received by the Minister of Defense and National Security, Hon. Elias Kwandikwa from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ambassador to Tanzania, H.E. Khalifa AbdulRahman Al Marzouqi. The 12,000 essential items, including sanitary towels, a mix of hygiene and health items, toiletries and hijabs, will be distributed to Tanzanian women currently on peacekeeping missions in the DRC, the Central Africa Republic, and Lebanon.

"We are grateful for this support. It is going to boost the morale of the women peacekeepers, and also enhance execution of duty," said Major Gessine.

On his side, H.E. Khalifa Abdul-Rahman Al Marzouqi, said the gift was part of efforts by Her Highness Sheikah Fatima Bint

Mubarak, to empower women Continues on page 12

in the peace and security sectors in and beyond the UAE. This follows the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the United Arab Emirates and UN Women, under the facilitation of the General Women's Union, the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood and the Family Development Foundation in 2018.

"The MoU was signed after the success of the first training with the aim to expand the scope of the support to include other countries in an initiative unprecedented in the history of the UAE and UN Women partnership," Ambassador AbdulRahman Al Marzougi said.

On her part, UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Zlatan Milisic,



The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ambassador to Tanzania, H.E. Khalifa AbdulRahman Al Marzouqi hands over essential items to a female peacekeeper during the handover ceremony. Behind them are some of the boxes that contain the 12,000 essential items contributed by UAE, including sanitary towels, a mix of hygiene and health items, toiletries and hijabs. Photo | UN Tanzania

partners of the United Republic of Tanzania and the UN. and for being true advocates for Gender Equality. "We know that, uniformed women peacekeepers have abilities equal to

thanked UAE, for being great their male counterparts, they strengthen links with the communities they serve, they enable better situational awareness and consequently strengthen the execution of protection of civilian mandates."



(from left to right) Chief of Staff of the Chief of the Tanzania People's Defence Forces, Lt. Gen Yacoub Hassani Mohamed; UN Women Representative, Ms. Hodan Addou; UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Zlatan Milisic; Minister of Defense and National Service, Hon. Elias John Kwandikwa; United Arab Emirates Ambassador to Tanzania, His Excellency Khalifa AbdulRahman Al Marzouqi. Photo | UN Tanzania

WFP HANDS OVER 40 FREIGHT WAGONS TO TRC



Hon. Godfrey Kasekenya, Deputy Minister of Transport (centre) cuts a ribbon to mark the official hand over of the 40 freight wagons from WFP to TRC. Looking on are Ms. Sarah Gordon-Gibson, WFP Country Director and Representative (third left) and Mr. Masanja Kadogosa, Director General of TRC (far left). Photo Credit: *Photo | WFP Tanzania*

n February 2021, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) handed 40 refurbished freight wagons to the Tanzania Railway Cooperation (TRC) to help facilitate the transportation of food to communities including refugees in the Great Lakes Region.

The ceremony held at the TRC Ilala Goods Shed in Dar Es Salaam attracted several dignitaries including The Deputy Minister of Transport, Godfrey Kasekenya, WFP Tanzania Country Director and Representative Sarah Gordon-Gibson and Mr. Masanja Kadogosa, Director General of TRC.

WFP works closely with the Government of Tanzania to strengthen the national supply chain capacity. The Railway Company and WFP signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2019. They agreed that WFP would invest \$600,000 (Sh.1.2 billion) to refurbish 40 freight wagons, further enhancing the capacity of the re-opened Lake Victoria rail-lake-rail corridor.

The rail-lake-rail corridor is a win-win solution as it reduces transit time and transport costs by around 40 percent com-

pared to road travel alone. The corridor is very cost-efficient corridor.

"Tanzania is bordering eight countries, five of them are landlocked. WFP is supporting the Government to strengthen the country's role as a maritime gateway and regional logistics hub. The strategic geographic location of Tanzania offers huge potential, and together we must seize the opportunities to further strengthen the partnership between the Government, the private sector and WFP, thereby transforming Tanzania into a major logistics hub in East Afri

ca", said Ms Gordon-Gibson.

WFP uses railways as part of a multimodal transport system to move food commodities to its regional operations. In addition to Lake Victoria Central Corridor, WFP uses Dar es Salaam port to move cargo in-transit to the Democratic of Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi via Kigoma port. Under this model, food is transported by rail to Kigoma port and then across Lake Tanganyika to Kalemie port and Uvira in DRC and Bujumbura, Burundi.

According to Mr. Kadogosa, more than 14 million tonnes of cargo were transported to foreign countries in the past, but the numbers declined due to a lack of wagons to move cargo across the borders. With the refurbished wagons, he is optimist that more customers will use the rail to move their cargo within the country and to neigh-



Hon. Godfrey Kasekenya, Deputy Minister of Transport flags off a block train carrying WFP commodities destined for the Democratic of Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi via Kigoma port. Photo Credit: *Photo* | *WFP Tanzania*

bouring countries.

"At the start of 2019, we had a total of 800 wagons to renovate, of which 593 have been refurbished so far," said Mr. Kadogosa. "After seeing the support from WFP, other stakeholders have shown interest in renovating our wagons and we currently discussing ways on how they can renovate the remaining wagons," he said.

In total, the Government and its stakeholders have spent over \$1,725,000 (Sh4 billion) to refurbish more than 300 wagons, doubling the use of cargo transportation in the country.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ZERO TOLERANCE FOR FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION: NO TIME FOR INACTION

eema* left home at the age of 10 to escape female genital mutilation (FGM). Her mother had been educated about the harmful impacts of the practice and did not want her daughter to be cut, but there was strong resistance from the rest of her family who believed they were doing the right thing for their daughter, avoiding the stigma and isolation she would suffer if she remained uncut. Neema's father gave her a choice. She either underwent FGM or she left home; she chose the latter and fled to a safe house run by the Association for Termination of FGM in Masanga.

Today, Neema lives with her husband, Pastor Samweli, and her mother-in-law who are both fierce anti-FGM advocates. She too has joined the fight to eliminate FGM and is a mirror to other girls in her community showing them that girls who are not cut still get married, are still respected.

As part of commemorations to mark International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM on 6 February 2021, the Tanzania Coalition against FGM(TCAFGM) – which hosts 22 organizations united in their aim to eliminate the harmful practice launched a *Continues on page 15*



Neema is a mirror to girls in her community; showing them that girls who are not cut still get married, are still respected. *Photo* | *UNFPA Tanzania*

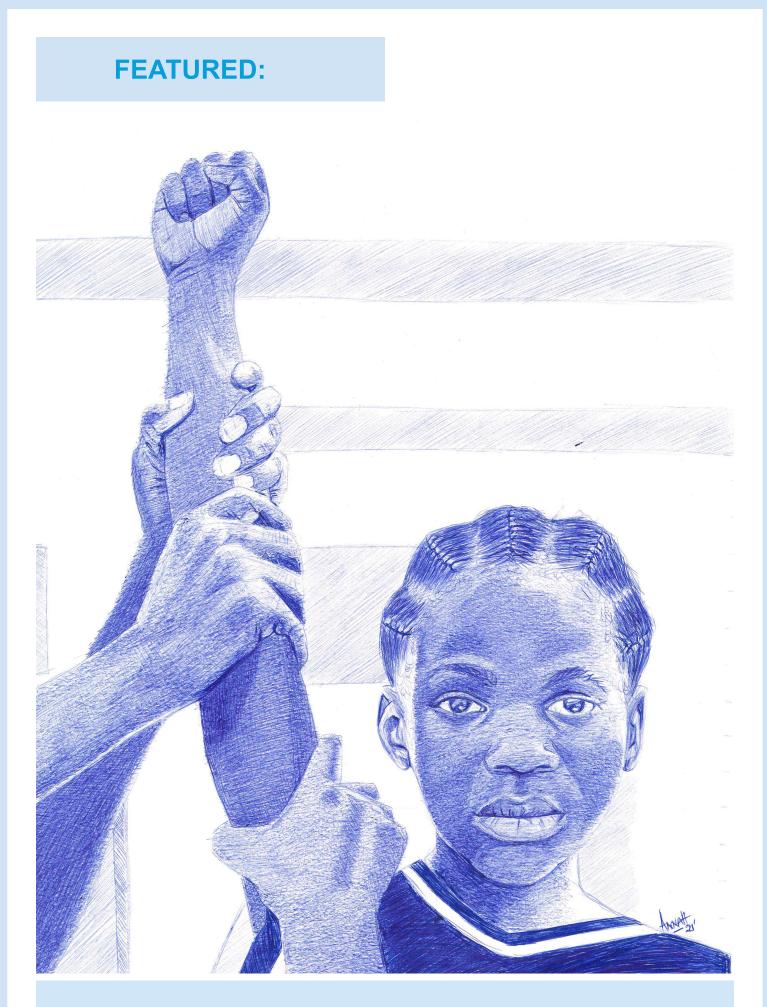
physical and virtual exhibition, supported by UNFPA and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Through music, film and images the exhibition shines a spotlight on the faces of resilience - individuals and organizations who are driving change around behaviours and social norms that uphold FGM, and empowering girls and women, families and communities to say no to this harmful practice. It includes photos of Neema and her husband and the two children they now have - she is busy, juggling the roles of mother and hairdresser at her little shop in Tarime District and is still a vehement anti-FGM activist.

Speaking before the launch of the virtual exhibition, Anna Hen-

ga, Executive Director, Legal and Human Rights Centre, and a member of TCAFGM, said: "Girls are being tortured in the name of upholding traditions, this is wrong and hard to comprehend. It's time for communities to come together in the fight against FGM in Tanzania."

As part of wider commemorations for Zero Tolerance to FGM, the Tanzania Development Information Organisation (TADIO), with the support of UNFPA, broadcast four programmes on community radio networks in five regions of Tanzania with a high FGM prevalence throughout February highlighting the support structures and safe spaces that exist for girls at risk of – or subjected to FGM and the organizations that are tackling the persistent discriminatory gender norms that uphold the practice...as well as the stories of hope and change.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) chart the path to the ambitious goal of eliminating FGM by 2030 so that every woman and girl can exercise their human rights, reach their potential and contribute fully to their communities and futures. With the deadline for the SDGs looming ever closer to deliver. UNFPA Tanzania stands with Neema, and the millions of girls like her around the world, in saying: "This is no time for inaction. Unite, fund, and act to end FGM!"



Young girls need to supported through joint efforts by various people in the community. Artist | Annah Nkyalu

April 25th – World Malaria Day

April 28th - World Day for Safety and Health at Work

May 3rd - World Press Freedom Day

May 22nd - International Day for Biological Diversity

May 23rd - International Day to End Obstetric Fistula

May 29th - International Day of UN Peacekeepers

A STRONGER UNITED NATIONS FOR A BETTER WORLD



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