

The
African Report
on Child Wellbeing
2020



How friendly are African governments towards girls?

Report Launch

20 November 2020 | 14:00 EAT

#GetGirlsEqual

To access the live broadcast:
<http://acpf-portal.world-television.com>

For more info, please visit:
<https://www.africanchild.report>

Embargoed until 1400 EAT / 1100 GMT November 20 2020

African girls “robbed of their future” by government failures.

Mauritius and Tunisia named Africa’s most girl-friendly countries; Comoros and South Sudan come bottom.

Addis Ababa, November 20 2020. African girls are being robbed of their future and condemned to a lifetime of discrimination and inequality, according to an alarming report launched today which ranks 52 African countries according to how ‘girl-friendly’ they are.

To be a girl in Africa frequently means being denied education; getting married too young; enduring sexual, physical and emotional abuse at home, work and school; being barred from owning and inheriting property; and being last in the queue when it comes to state spending on health. The reports’ authors, the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), say the Covid-19 pandemic is only making things worse.

“African girls have endured harmful cultural beliefs, patriarchal gender attitudes and discriminatory laws, policies and practices for far too long,” said Dr Joan Nyanyuki, ACPF’s Executive Director. “Despite slow progress in some areas, girls across the continent continue to wake up to the daily reality of injustice. An entire generation of girls and young women is being failed.”

The African Report on Child Wellbeing 2020: How Friendly are African Governments towards Girls? finds that girls living in Africa today are more likely to be victims of trafficking, sexual abuse and labour exploitation; more likely to get married much younger and/or experience FGM than girls anywhere else; discriminated against by laws relating to marriage and inheritance; and likely to be poorer than boys. In addition, they are at higher risk of mental health problems; more likely to be excluded from healthcare; and denied a decent education and more likely to drop out of school.

“Girls and women have always been and will continue being the bedrock of African society, then, now and in the future,” said Mrs Graça Machel, Chair of the ACPF International Board of Trustees. “But their contribution has remained considerably undervalued. For us to create a just and inclusive society, to prosper and ensure sustainable development, we must invest in our girls.

“The facts paint a sobering picture of the situation of girls and remind us that governments’ efforts are simply not enough and incommensurate with the myriads of challenges they are facing,” added Mrs Machel. “As a mother and grandmother myself, my heart aches to see a child mother and, unfortunately, we have millions of them on this continent.”

ACPF’s unique Girl-Friendliness Index (GFI) shows that African governments are increasingly becoming more girl-friendly and that some African governments take girls’ rights and wellbeing seriously - but many do not. The GFI rates Mauritius as the most girl-friendly country in Africa, with Tunisia, South Africa, Seychelles, Algeria, Cabo Verde and Namibia also in the top category. Bottom of the table comes South Sudan, with Chad, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger, Central African Republic and Comoros all rated as least child-friendly.

“Without determined and targeted action, African girls will be left behind as we step up efforts to achieve Africa’s Agenda 2063 and most specifically Africa’s Agenda for Children 2040,” said Dr Joan Nyanyuki. “This important report acknowledges the progress made by some African governments towards protecting and promoting girls’ rights and wellbeing, but it also shows that much more needs to be done, especially in this time of the Covid-19 pandemic. Girls in Africa today are respected and valued far less than boys, and are denied the same life chances. Inequality and discrimination remains the norm. This has to change, and change now.”

ENDS

- For further information or to arrange interviews please contact

Martin Atkin, Communications Consultant

martin@funnelweb.org

+44(0)779 544 3607

Skype: martin.atkin

- The full report and Girl-Friendliness Index will be available to download at <https://www.africanchild.report> at 1400 EAT / 1100 GMT on November 20.

- To participate in the live-streamed launch event from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, please register at

<http://acpf-portal.world-television.com>

- Speakers will include:

- Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women
- H.E. Mrs Graça Machel, Chair of the ACPF International Board of Trustees
- H.E. Mrs. Neo Jane Masisi, First Lady, Republic of Botswana
- Mama Fatima Singhateh, UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children
- H.E. Emmanuel Mulenga, Minister of Sports, Youth and Child Development, Republic of Zambia
- Mr Yassir Saleim, Director, Child Rights Institute, Republic of Sudan
- Dr Joan Nyanyuki, Executive Director, ACPF
- Mr Yehualashet Mekonen, Programme Manager, African Child Observatory, ACPF

About ACPF: African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) is an independent, not-for-profit, Pan-African centre of policy research and advocacy centre on the African child. It was established in 2003 out of

concern about the situation of the African child and the need for Africans to recognise their responsibility to collectively ensure the realisation of all rights to all children.
More info at <http://africanchildforum.org/>

About the GFI: The Girl-Friendliness Index (GFI), developed by the ACPF, is a sophisticated rights-based statistical methodology that uses a wide range of data to measure the progress of 52 African governments towards realising the rights and wellbeing of girls. It is a unique tool which ranks how well or poorly a government performs when it comes to the rights and wellbeing of girls, scoring governments against 23 indicators to maximise efforts to respect, protect and fulfil girls' rights and ensure gender equality among children. For more details of how the CFI is compiled see Annex 1 of the *The African Report on Child Wellbeing 2020*.