

## YOUTH ADVOCACY NETWORK (YAN)

A POSITION PAPER PRESENTED ON THE 2018 DAY OF  
AFRICAN CHILD (JUNE 16)

COMMEMORATION THEME:

“NOR PIKIN NOR FOR LEF BEHEN FOR SALONE E BETEH WAN”

YOUTH ADVOCACY NETWORK (YAN)

16TH JUNE 2018

### INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, the Chief Administrative Officer of the Koinadugu District Council, Heads/Representatives of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Heads/Representatives of the Civil Society Organisations (CSO), our noble Paramount Chiefs, members of the forth estate, colleague children, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, all protocols observed.

It is obvious from the theme of this year Day of the African Child commemoration that in so many ways, so many of our colleague children had been left behind in the development processes of our country Sierra Leone and Africa a whole. The reasons for this may not be unconnected to the many challenges and problems facing us the children. In relation to this, we, children from different school communities met on the 15th day of July 2018 at the Conference Room of the YAN Office to discuss and bring out our position and as well as our recommendations on some of the pressing issues that are ought to be addressed, if no child should be left behind for Sierra Leone's and Africa's development. These problems include but they are not limited to the following four; (1) Early/Child Marriage, (2) Teenage Pregnancy, (3) Poor Education (4) Child FGM and (5) Children With Disabilities.

### OUR POSITION ON CHILD/EARLY MARRIAGE

The rate of child/early marriage is high especially in rural communities.

Public awareness on child/early marriage is not enhanced in rural communities.

The laws on child/early marriage are highly neglected and not being fully enforced.

The laws that are guiding children against child/early marriage, are not clear as the Customary Marriage and Divorce Act contradicts the Child Right Act.

#### OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The government in collaboration with non-governmental organization should embark on more effective and efficient awareness raising campaign on child/early marriage.

Laws enforcement bodied should ensure that the laws are fully enforced.

There is a need to review the Customer Marriage and Divorce Act.

4 Community bye-laws against early marriage should be made and fully enforced.

#### OUR POSITION ON TEENAGE PREGNANCY

The rate of teenage pregnancy is high especially in rural communities.

Public awareness on teenage pregnancy is not enhanced in rural communities.

The laws on teenage pregnancy are highly neglected and not being enforced.

There is high level of compromise at all levels- (parents, community stakeholders, law enforcement bodies).

Many perpetrators of teenage pregnancy enjoy impunity.

#### OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The government in collaboration with non-governmental organization should embark on more effective and efficient awareness raising campaign on teenage pregnancy.

Laws enforcement bodied should ensure that the laws are fully enforced.

The government and its partners should provide effective and efficient livelihood support for the rural people (especially women).

## OUR POSITION ON POOR EDUCATION

There are inadequate teaching and learning materials in both primary and secondary schools.

There are inadequate accommodation in both primary and secondary schools.

There are inadequate trained and qualified teachers to teach in primary and secondary schools.

There is lack of Water and Sanitation Hygiene (WASH) facilities in many primary schools.

Academic malpractices.

So many schools environment are not child friendly.

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The government and NGOs should provide more teaching and learning materials in both primary and secondary schools.

The government and NGOs should provide more accommodations in both primary and secondary schools.

There are inadequate trained and qualified teachers to teach in primary and secondary schools.

The government and NGOs should provide Water and Sanitation Hygiene (WASH) facilities in many primary schools.

The government should put in place robust monitoring and inspection systems at educational institutions.

## OUR POSITION ON CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY

Children with disabilities are still facing discrimination and stigmatization.

There is inadequate teaching and learning material at the School for the Blind.

There is absence of education opportunities and facilities for the deaf and dome.

There are poor medical facilities and attention for children with disabilities.

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Community stakeholder should set by-laws that will prevent children with disabilities for discrimination and stigmatization.

Government and NGOs should provide more teaching and learning materials at the school for the blind, and should also provide other facilities for other categories of disabilities.

Education and medical facilities should be at free bases for children with disabilities.

## OUR POSITION ON CHILD FGM

- 1.The practice of Child FGM is still in practice especially in rural communities
- 2.The Child FGM is still causing health hazards to girls
- 3.Child FGM is still causing girls to get in to Child marriage
- 4 Drought out of school due to Child FGM
- 5.No by-laws against child FGM

## OUR RECOMMENDATION

1. By-laws should be made against Child FGM and it must be clear that it against the right of the girls and the laws must be enforced
- 2 Community awareness about the danger of Child FGM
- 3.Fines must be levelled against any perpetrators of child FGM
- 4.Follow up on the enforcement of the laws
- 5.Engagement of traditional leaders and Soweï women about Child FGM