



## **Network against FGM/C in Somaliland (NAFIS NETWORK)**

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### **Commemoration Statement**

#### **6<sup>th</sup> February 2016- International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM/C)**

The International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM was designed as an initiative aimed at taking the fight for the eradication of FGM to a new height. It doubled as a melting pot for the sharing of experiences, updating priorities and finding a common course in a more coordinated manner for accelerating the eradication of FGM. The initiative of finding a final solution to this problem provided the necessary step needed to engage and win the support of the CSOs, Government Key Ministries, and the international NGO's in caging this ravaging problem. The discussions of the day were focused on the theme of this year (2016) which is: **'Achieving the new Global Goals through the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation by 2030'**

A big commemoration event was held in Hargeisa, Somaliland on 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 which was organized collectively by the Somaliland Anti-FGM/C stakeholders led by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and Network against FGM/C in Somaliland (NAFIS Network). The following are speech highlights given by key individuals at the event.

**Ms. Amina Milgo** The chairperson of NAFIS Network acknowledged the achievements so far on steps to eradicate the practice of FGM/C and she said; *"today we have achieved a lot; we can publicly talk about issues of FGM/C to traditional and religious leaders, civil society and government institutions. Our communities are changing, although the prevalence rate is still high but there are a lot of achievements that we can mention.* Amina also accredited the effort of the Minister of Religious Affairs and religious leaders on the issue of outlawing FGM/C practice, but she urged to criminalize all forms of cutting to save all rights of girls and women.

The director of Social Affairs of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) Ms. Luul Aden highlighted that, the effort to eradicate FGM/C has been going on for a long time and a lot of things have been achieved beside the social misconceptions of the FGM/C believing that, this practice has a roots in

Islam,” *but we have successfully eradicated the Pharaonic type of FGM/C in Urban areas although it is still persistent in nomad areas, and this is where we need to put extra efforts for the coming years*”

Ms. Luul also emphasized that, FGM/C does not protect the girls as many parents believe, but what safeguards is how the girls are raised and educated during her childhood, she added “instead it causes most of psychological and health complications that girls experience throughout their life from the day they are circumcised to the death”.

The Minister of Religious Affairs Mr. Khaliil Abdillahi Adan said that it is very important for all to have a common stand against FGM/C, he urged the religious leaders to come on the stage and declare what the religion says about FGM/C, he stated that Islam does not promote cutting of human being parts, instead Islam safeguards human being as they are born complete, but it is for sure a satanic act, the Minister *said “today is a sad day for all of us, we are extremely regretful about what is happening to our girls, but it’s our responsibility to stop it, the government, religious/traditional leaders, local and international communities, I am sure if we work together we can stop this practice”.*

**Mr. Ali Sandule**, the Minister of Labor Social Affairs closed the conference *stating ‘I am appreciating all of the stakeholders who showed a tireless efforts to stop FGM/C, he pledged that he will put extra efforts on the development of a law banning all forms of FGM/C’.*

NAFIS as the national network championing on the total eradication of FGM/C is ready and committed to the fight and achievement of a zero tolerant rate on FGM/C in Somaliland. To achieve this; NAFIS believe in the following aspects to be implemented as a way to fight the practice of FGM/C.

- To change the current awareness raising approaches and renew the initiatives by use of the 12 champions’ model of change presented by NAFIS recently to realize community acceptance of the message and instigate a behavioral change from the grass root.
- Intensify and accelerate Anti-FGM/C advocacy in decision making levels and also at intellectual level (scholars), to come up with a clear policy and law criminalizing all forms of circumcision for the girls.
- Last year the religious leaders agreed to criminalize all forms of cutting, but they suggested what they called 'Sunna Circumcision' which is a small blood from the clitoris, we are urging them to come up a conclusion which can save our girls and support Zero tolerance towards this practice.

Mr. Abdirahman Osman Gaas

Executive director of NAFIS Network