

## Her Voice in the Climate Crisis

### #EndFGM

#### Webinar Report Held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024

The African Coalition of Communities Responsive to Climate Change (ACCRCC), is a regional non-government organization registered in Kenya. The vision of ACCRCC, is among others, to raise awareness and advocate on pertinent issues that affect African communities.

It is in this regard, that this webinar on climate change and female genital mutilation, was organised to bring various stakeholders to dialogue. The Speakers brought knowledge and experiences as they interacted with the communities in their practice of many years and more so engagement in women and girls empowerment in Kenya. They included **Ms Mary Mutula**, Executive Director Tuboreshe Pamoja, Machakos County; **Dr. Susan Gitau**, a Psychologist Director Elewa Ulevi, Kiambu County; **Dr. Teresia Njora**, Director Baraka Women Center, Laikipia & Samburu Counties; **Ms. Carolyne Titia**, a youth, Director Ambassadors 4 Change, Turkana County; and **Dr. Rosalind Nkirote**, Executive Director ACCRCC, Nairobi County.

**This is nothing that the two important matters are sustainable development matters that affect women inappropriately. The discourse aimed to shed light on the ‘Nexus between Climate Change and FGM’ and how climate change may be hindering the efforts to eliminate this practice.** This event aimed to present to the African and the global community the importance of integrating Mental Health issues in climate-related emergency and disaster response noting the increasing vulnerability of communities, with an increase in frequency and intensity of extreme weather and climate events.

The International Day of Zero Tolerance for female genital mutilation (FGM) is observed globally on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February. This day presents an opportunity for stakeholders to dialogue on key actions to end FGM, as well as celebrate achievements made and advocate for the abandonment of the practice and raise awareness. These then have health implications for individuals and more so psychological and mental well-being.

Notable is that FGM is a global practice that is rooted in cultural and traditional practices that continuously affect women and girls contributing to an increase in inequality and violation of fundamental human rights.

SDG 3, Good health and well-being are violated when girls are put through pain, excessive bleeding, infections, difficulty in passing urine and effects on sexual and reproductive health as well as their mental health. Besides, leaving them with no time to harness their emotional and mental well-being as they need to adapt to the predicaments.

The situation for women and girls is further affected by climate change evidenced by severe frequent climate extremes such as droughts and floods. The social roles of women and girls

in fending for the families, including fetching water, firewood and cooking are adversely affected increasing the distress. They were militating against the achievement of SDG 5 on gender equality by 2030. This has made it harder for communities to abandon the practice, largely creating a setback in the elimination of FMG.

To bring transformation, alter unprofitable gender norms and empower girls and women in Africa their voices and actions have to be amplified through education, knowledge sharing, awareness raising, adding to contemporary rights values, as well as having their stories told.

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