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“MODERN ADVOCACY HUMANITARIAN SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION”

Global Aid and Well-being Associates

MAHSRA

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Speech Presented by the Chief Executive Officer of Modern Advocacy Humanitarian Social and Rehabilitation Association – MAHSRA

*On the Occasion of the Official Public Presentation and Signing Ceremony of Advocacy
Agreements to End Sexual Violence within localities in the West Region*

Programme Theme: *Enhancing Local Leaders' Capacity in Preventing Sexual Violence
Against Women*

His Excellency, the Governor of West Region;

His Excellency, the British High Commissioner to Cameroon;

The Senior Divisional Officers of Mifi, Bamoutos, Hauts Plateaux, Koung-Khi

The Regional and Divisional Delegates of the West Region

His Royal Highnesses, the first class chiefs of (*Bafoussam, Bamougoum, Baleng; Balacthi,
Bamessingue, Babadjou, Bagang; Baham, Bamendjou, Bameka, Bahouan; Bayangam, Bandjoun, Batoufam*)

The Entire Community Men and Women of the West Region,

All protocols duly respected

Ladies and Gentlemen;

To start, I will humbly acknowledge and give thanks to the Almighty God for making it possible for us to gather here today in order to institutionalise a new process which will enforce a community rights-based pattern that strives at eliminating the silent suffering ignorantly faced by thousands of women within the communities the West Region and beyond.

The initiative that brought us here today for the sake of ending gender-based violence has an overall dimension to foster the will of the Cameroonian government as duly transcribed through its ratification of several international conventions such as: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Declaration on the Right to Development (Outlined in the distributed manuals). With due accreditation as a legally registered entity both nationally and internationally and with a consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council, MAHSRA's goals, though with very limited material resources and yet with huge global intellectual influence, have been strategized for results orientated action platforms wherein high level policy reaching objectives are transpired through experience-based interactive sessions between the targeted beneficiary victims and the responsibilities of their governing authorities. As such, for the sake of increase or rapid sustainable development goals, MAHSRA aspires to interweave the well-being priorities of the majority vulnerable populations who are women in rural setups and the scope of their contributions towards poverty eradication and rural development as a whole.



Briefly, the course of global development prospects which ought to be felt at very local or rural levels is deemed to have women at the forefront. But, because these women are not often allowed to make their own sexual and reproductive health choices, they suffer consistent psychological damages. This weakens their will and strength to contribute to the growth of their communities. Whether through acts of rape, child abuse, defilement, incest, sexual abuse and exploitation, forced prostitution, sexual harassment, humiliation and confinement, female genital mutilation, underage and early marriages, I believe we all understanding the prejudicial factors behind them.

As leaders with influence over several thousands of community inhabitants and as responsible citizens of Cameroon, I believe we have a duty to enlighten and ensure that our people and women do not continue to suffer in ignorance meanwhile retarding the local development expectations of our communities. Acknowledging that much information to mitigate gender discrimination through eliminating sexual violence against women has been elaborated in the distributed manuals, I thus call on traditional leaders and government authorities here to:

- Remember that they have a legal mandate and duty to uphold all the laws of the country;
- Remember that they have a moral obligation as a leading public authority to live by example;
- Remember that any failure, neglect or weakness on their part to address situations that infringe the wellbeing and rights of vulnerable persons (women) may result in very devastating and legally implicative consequences;

As such, as traditional leaders and public authorities, there is need to uphold and enforce due legal accountability measures against the perpetrators of sexual violence acts against women and other illegal gender discriminatory practices.

While the process of sensitization and evaluation will continue in the field through all the traditional leaders who have received our trainings, I wish to extend specific remarks and a hand of fellowship the governor of the West region and the chiefs that welcomed us especially the chief of Baham and Bayangam. As well, to all the other chiefs present who though never had the chance to meet us, still thought it right to come here today. It will not go unnoticed, your will for development.

We as well extend thankful regards to our partner, the British High Commission to Cameroon whose instrumental support has paved or facilitated the realisation of this initiative.

Expecting that this initiative duly institutionalises a solid foundation will to eliminate all forms of gender violence and gender discrimination within the West region and beyond, may all those who participated in one way or the other to the successful activities receive bountiful blessings and become true ambassadors to the course to unite humanity in peace, mutual respect and positive wellbeing for all.

Long live the community women of the West Region

Long live the community leaders of the West Region

Long live the British Government Support for Rights and Well-being of Vulnerable People

Long Live MAHSRA

Long live Our Beloved Republic of Cameroon