

Oral Statement
Pre-UPR session on Benin
Geneva, 1 December 2022

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Nadine DOSSOU SAKPONOU and I represent the Association of Women Lawyers of Benin (AFA-B). I am speaking on behalf of the working group of Beninese CSOs for the Universal Periodic Review. My presentation will focus on the rights of children.

Following the numerous recommendations made to Benin during the last UPR concerning children who are victims of violence, exploitation and/or in conflict with the law, the Government adopted and promulgated in 2021 the law on special provisions for the repression of offences committed on the basis of sex; In 2022, it issued a decree establishing the terms and conditions for the creation, organization and operation of child protection centers, as well as the inclusion of a module on the protection of minors in the basic training curricula for magistrates.

However, the unavailability of transit centers, psycho-social care and reintegration centers for child victims, the need to strengthen the capacities of the various actors involved in child protection, and the lack of magistrates for minors are all challenges to be met.

In light of these challenges, the working group suggests the following recommendations

to popularize and effectively implement the National Child Protection Policy

continue efforts to manage, rehabilitate and reintegrate children in conflict with the law by developing a sustainable and inclusive policy

set up a fund to take charge of and provide full compensation for the damage suffered by children as a result of violence.

In the face of numerous recommendations made in Benin regarding children in detention and child trafficking, the situation remains worrisome. Indeed, children in detention are poorly fed, prison infirmaries are poorly supplied with medication, and most minors in detention are not assisted by a lawyer. There is no policy in line with international standards for the management, rehabilitation and reintegration of children in conflict with the law. The Child and Adolescent Care Centers (CSEA), which should be an alternative to incarceration for minors, were dysfunctional.

Benin has made efforts to reduce child trafficking by strengthening cooperation with neighboring countries in the fight against transnational trafficking, creating a formal inter-ministerial committee, establishing a

national action plan to fight human trafficking and strengthening the legislative framework through the adoption of various laws.

Despite this progress, Benin continues to be a country of origin, transit and destination for women and children who are trafficked mainly for forced labor and sexual exploitation.

Faced with such facts, the working group suggests inviting the Beninese state to

promote penal mediation and take other measures for supervised education provided for in the Children's Code

improve the functioning of child and adolescent protection centers in accordance with international standards and the provisions of the Children's Code

Ensure the effective implementation of measures taken to limit the stay in prison of children deprived of their liberty because of their imprisoned mothers by continuing to provide them with good conditions in accordance with the provisions of the Children's Code.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your kind attention.