

## UNFPA STATEMENT ON BENIN UPR OUTCOME REPORT

Thank you, Mr. President,

UNFPA commends the Government of Benin UPR report which demonstrates developments related to the legal and institutional framework for the promotion and protection of human rights. UNFPA Benin wishes to make a few observations in supporting the government towards meeting the following challenges:

During the reporting period, the country faced difficulties and objective constraints that led to a delay in implementing some recommendations. The difficulties included a lack of resources allocated for the implementation of some programs and projects. Illiteracy and lack of information, particularly in rural areas, are other important factors that will need to be addressed so that the government succeeds in implementing outstanding and new recommendations.

Despite the efforts made, the influence of cultural practices hinders respect for some rights. UNFPA is concerned that harmful practices, such as child and forced marriages, polygamy, female genital mutilation, widowhood practices, (inheritance of sisters or inheritance of husbands), and purification rites for adulterous women, continue to be prevalent and go unpunished.

The efforts of Benin to disseminate legislation on the prevention and prohibition of violence against women and the adoption of a specific law punishing violence against women and girls are just a step in ending the alarming rates of both domestic and sexual violence against women and girls.

The government accepted several UPR recommendations on which UNFPA is committed to providing support, including the following:

- Strengthen the fight against **discriminatory practices** and **violence against women and girls**, by applying rigorously and adopting all the necessary measures to enforce the law on the prevention and punishment of violence against women and girls.
- Implement measures aimed at eliminating all forms of **Gender-based violence**, including, violence against women and girls, domestic violence, child, early and forced marriage, and marital rape.
- Support efforts to ensure that the **law criminalizing FGM** is enforced and that offenders are prosecuted, including through publicity and awareness raising campaigns on convictions in order to deter individuals in concerned communities.
- Ensure **sexual and reproductive health and rights** by improving the health-care infrastructure and reduce the rates of **infant, neonatal and maternal mortality**, as well as enable **access to emergency obstetric care, midwife training, and resources devoted to maternal health**.
- Adopt a **comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents**, including mandatory **sexual and reproductive health education** for all adolescents.