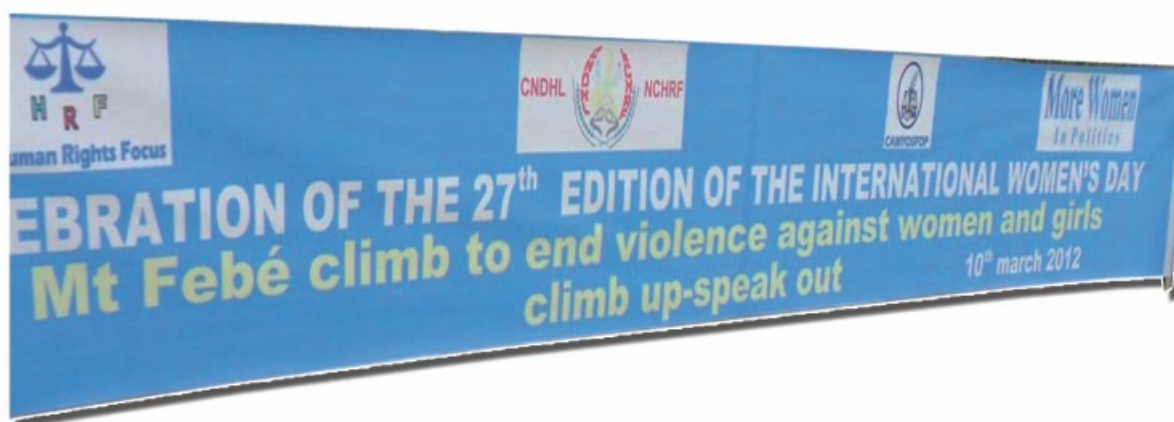


Report

The Mount Febe Africa UNiTE Solidarity Climb To End Political Violence Against Women and Girls in Cameroon.

Climb Up, Speak Out!
"Say NO to Political Violence Against Women and Girls"



Saturday, March 10, 2012

Organized by

Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP)
Human Rights Focus (HRF)
Network of More Women in Politics (NMWP)

In Partnership with

National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF)

Supported by

Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF)
UN Secretary General Africa UNiTE Campaign on Violence Against Women



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I. Foreword

Violence against women is an old age problem that spans through centuries and affects humans in a special way. It is a human rights violation promoted by some traditional norms and which has been considered necessary for the good management in many of our societies. As a result of violence these vulnerable segment of the population are sometimes traumatised, immobilised and even killed silently.

In Cameroon, despite the legislative and institutional progress made over the years in curbing this kind of violence, some remote communities still continue to practice obnoxious practices such as female genital mutilation, early and forceful marriages, incest, rape, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and trafficking. Most of our traditions in Cameroon still hold to the fact that the male child is privileged in terms of access to education, employment, and freedom of speech.

Another very important aspect, is the fact that political violence against women is witnessed on day to day basis in the Cameroon political landscape with very few women found in leadership positions for the over 250 existing political parties. In terms of profiling candidates for political positions women only come in second position. Out of 180 Members of Parliament, only 23 are women. For local governments, out of the 360 mayors only 24 are female. Out of the over 64 cabinet ministers, only 8 are women. Finally, since the independence of Cameroon in 1960 no woman has ever held a position of Army General, Divisional Officer or Governor.

The above statistics insinuate that political violence against women is a reality and much still needs to be done to overcome this kind of violence. In so doing we will be able to achieve the MDG number 3 on advancing women's empowerment and gender equality and giving a new impetus to the Beijing platform for action and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. It is therefore for this reason that the Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP), Human Rights Focus (HRF), and the Network of More Women in Politics (NWMP) did not hesitate to spearhead the UN Secretary General's Campaign through the Mt Febe solidarity climb to end violence against women and girls in Cameroon as a replica to the Mt Kilimanjaro Solidarity Climb.

Despite the fact that we joined the Mt Kilimanjaro continental initiative very late, we are very grateful that the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) of Cameroon did not hesitate to partner with us and also patronize the project. The participation of Dr Chemuta Divine Banda, Chairman of the NCHRF in the climb spurred the participants to take the momentum forward after the climb.

We also wish to extend our sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family who provided institutional support to the event. Our regular contacts and meetings with UN Women and the Mt Kilimanjaro solidarity climb organizers were also instrumental in overcoming some organisational lapses. If not for the participation of the various associations, faith base groups and the media, the initiative wouldn't have been a success. We are therefore indebted to these groups. Finally I am particularly thankful to the members of the organising team that committed themselves and worked relentlessly day and night for the success of the event. Namely: Comfort Fombong of HRF; Dr Justine Dikko of NMWP; Synthia Ifaana Kwalar, Paschal Chem Langhee and Alex Joseph Bikok of CAMYOSFOP; and Mabelle Nkwenti and Eva Etongue Elangue of NCHRF. The Mt Febe solidarity climb is not just an impromptu event on our contribution to the UN Secretary General's Campaign on violence against Women and Girls but an on-going process with more galvanizing momentum and resounding commitments that will take us to 2014 and beyond.

I wish to end by advising all those reading this report to log on: www.africaunitecampaign.org for details on the other events on the continent.

NGALIM Eugene Nyuydine

Executive Director - Cameroon Youths and students forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP)

Commissioner - National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF)

1. Introduction

The Mount Febe solidarity climb on political violence against women and girls in Cameroon held on March 10, 2012 was a replica of the Mt Kilimanjaro solidarity climb on the UN Secretary General Campaign (Africa UNiTE) on violence against women in Africa. The event in Cameroon was initiated by the Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP), Human Rights Focus (HRF) and the Network of More Women in Politics (NMWP), in partnership with the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) and with the support of the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF) and the UN Secretary General Africa UNiTE campaign.



Partial view of Mt Febe



A view of the city of Yaounde from the top of Mt Febe

1.1. The aim of the Climb:

The climb that was aimed at joining other African countries in the UN Secretary General's Campaign (Africa UNiTE) by sensitising, informing and educating the population on the presence and the ramification of violence against women and girls and to commit towards clear actions to be taken collectively, to achieve this within the framework of the Africa UNiTE campaign to end VAWGs. The event in Cameroon was focused on political violence against women and girls since 2012 is an electoral year with municipal and legislative elections expected to hold in the months ahead.



Delegation of Nso Bati women group



Ms Kwalar Ifaana, CAMYOSFOP Programmes Officer with a group of the youngest participants

1.2. Attendance:

The climb brought together women, men, girls and boys from all ages and walks of life. Participants included members of government institutions, civil society organizations, faith base groups, youth and student organizations, Cultural organizations and individuals. 40 groups and 10 media organs making a total number of over 600 people participated in the climb. Precautions was taken by the organizers to guarantee the necessary health and security services in case of any unforeseen circumstances by inviting the Central Hospital mobile health service and Police that accompanied the participants from the start to the finish.



Central Hospital medical personnel in the Ambulance

1.3. The strategic route for the Climb

The Mount Febe is a 1000m peak located at the outskirt of Yaoundé. It is famous for the Mt Febe Hotel that host many tourists and business conferences, the Pronuncio and the catholic Monastery that host retreats, all located on its slope. The Mountain is surrounded by the rich Bastos neighbourhood, the contrasting enclave Bankolo neighbourhood, the Yaounde conference centre and the Unity Palace Presidential Residency of Cameroon. The itinerary of this climb started from Carrefour Foire Bankolo Mt Febe Rond Point Bastos. This itinerary drew a lot of attention from people leaving in the neighbourhood of the mountain.



Ms Eva Etongue, Chief of Promotion and Protection Division, NCHRF



Ms Patience Elango, Board member of CAMYOSFOP

2. The Event Proper

2.2. Kick off of the Climb

The event proper started at 7.30am with muscle relaxation physical exercises. At 8:00am the Executive Director of CAMYOSFOP, Mr. Ngalim Eugene Nyuydine, thanked all the participants for their presence and once more reminded them of why the climb. This was followed by a word from the chairman of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms, Dr. Chemuta Divine Banda. He expressed his joy at the massive turnout with a significant number of men present. He elaborated on the Kilimanjaro climb from an eye-witness perspective, as he had freshly returned from Tanzania where he participated in the climb. True to his word, he then wished the participants a safe trip to the Mt Febe and back.



Dr Chemuta Divine Banda, Chairman of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms and Ngalim Eugene Nyuydine, Executive Director of CAMYOSFOP addressing participants before the climb.



Immediately after the official kick off by Dr. Banda, the climbers followed the defined itinerary characterized by songs and cheers. Songs evoked messages of peace and women empowerment. Climbers also raised awareness with their t-shirts, posters and banners that bore telling messages on violence against women and girls. They also shared flyers denouncing violence against women and girls to onlookers and passers-by. The climbers halted at the mountain peak to do more physical exercises, and upon arriving the finish point. At the top of the mountain, the organizers presented their commitments to the participants. These commitments are expected to be achieved by 2014 which is the final year of the UN Secretary General's Campaign on the fight against violence on women and girls.



2.2. End of the Climb

At the end of the end of the climb at about 11am, Dr. Banda, Chairman of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms who himself participated in the climb from the start to the end once more addressed the climbers. He congratulated the women, the older climbers and the children who were able to go up to the mountain and back. He noted that, if these generations of people could do this itinerary, then we could equally overcome violence in our communities. He then encouraged the women to stand up and take action to end political violence, and prompted the men to support the women in this worthy endeavour. He encouraged women to actively participate in the coming legislative and municipal elections by running for positions in the Parliament and Councils.



Dr Banda, Mr Nguimbous Andre, member of NCHRF and Ngalim on the slopes of Mt Febe



According to him radical change on violence against women will be easily achieved through their participation in these institutions where decisions are taken at the base and at the top. Dr. Banda once more informed participants that the doors of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms are open especially to all those that their rights have been violated. His closing remarks ended with photographs and merry making. The participants went home so satisfied and with a deeper understanding of what political violence is and how to stop it.



Dr Banda addressing participants at the end of the climb



Dr Banda addressing the press at the end of the climb



Ngalim Eugene addressing the press

3. Commitments of the Mt Febe Climb

The commitment taken by the organizers at the top of the mountain and are expected to be achieved by 2014 are:

- Intensify advocacy for the elimination of violence against women, especially young women, in politics; for more women to get into Parliament so as to address the stalemate around the adoption of gender equality related Bills including the Family Code (pending for more than 15 years), the Draft Bill to end Violence Against Women (pending for more than 10 years) and the effective ratification of the AU Protocol on women's rights in Africa and ensure implementation;
- Continue leadership at national and even sub-regional level to mobilize and engage youths, women, lawyers, traditional leaders, and other stakeholders in the implementation of the UN SG's/AU UNiTE Campaign to end violence against women and girls in Africa, working with the Campaign's Secretariat;
- Engage the media at all levels on issues of addressing VAW/Gs;
- Create youth gender equality clubs in communities, schools and villages to change mind sets and build more equitable societies;
- Seek information on youth empowerment and share at national level,
- Mentor young girls and boys, expose them to national, regional and international activism on ending violence against women and girls;
- Take the lead in advocating with the government for the full implementation and domestication of Article 23 of the African Youth Charter on the rights of girls and young women;
- Use social media like facebook, twitter, and our websites to enhance interest and debates and share experiences on VAW/Gs. We target reaching at least 1.000.000 opinion leaders around the globe by 2014;
- Publish an online Journal on activities around VAW/Gs;
- Capitalize on the support and leadership provided by the NCHRF in organizing the solidarity to engage with the institution on providing more support to women and girls whose rights have been violated and survivors of VAW/Gs.

4. Appendix

4.1. Associations and Groups invited for the Climb

1. National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF).
2. Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP)
3. Human Rights Focus (HRF).
4. Network of More Women in Politics (NMWP)
5. Réseau Camerounaise des Organisations des Droits des l'Homme (RECOD)
6. Organisation Sociale pour le Bien-être de Tous
7. Jeunesse Volontaire des Nations Unies pour la Promotion des Droits de l'Homme
8. Association Femmes pour la Paix au Cameroun
9. Association of Female Jurist
10. Association De Lutte Contre Les Violences Faites Aux Femmes
11. Cercle de Recherche sur les Devoirs de la Personne Humaine
12. Association Camerounaise Des Droits De L'enfant
13. Réflexion et Actions Concrètes pour le Développement de L'Afrique
14. Association Horizons Femmes
15. Gender Mainstreaming and Networking Organization
16. Action des Chrétiens pour L'Abolition de la Torture
17. Réseau National pour la Protection des Défenseurs des Droits de l'Homme RENAPDDHO
18. Organisation de Développement et des Droits de l'Homme au Cameroun
19. Association Nationale des Operateurs du Secteur Informel pour la Lutte contre la Pauvreté au Cameroun (ANOSILP)
20. Dynamique Mondiale des Jeunes
21. Association pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme et des Liberté (ADDHL)
22. Association Jeunesse Verte du Cameroun (AJVC)
23. Africa Development Interchange Network (ADIN)
24. Fondation Conseil Jeune (FCJ)
25. Solution aux Migration Clandestine (SMIC)
26. Jeunesse Rural Active (JEURAC)
27. Dynamique Citoyene
28. National Platform of CSOs Networks in Cameroon (PLANOSCAM)
29. HARAMBE Cameroon
30. Youth Employment Service (YES)
31. Action Vitales pour le Developpement Durable (AVD).

32. Nso Bati Women
33. Wimbun Student's Union
34. Etug-ebe Baptist Church Youth Group
35. Etug-ebe Baptist Church Men's Group
36. Etug-ebe Baptist Church Women's Group
37. Simple Ladies
38. Cité Verte Catholic Women
39. The Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) of PCC Nsimenyong.
40. The Centre Region Anglophone Basic Education Teachers' Association (CEPABETA)

4.2. Media Organs

1. Cameroon Radio and Television Cooperation (CRTV)
2. Vision 4 TV
3. Sky Radio
4. Magic FM
5. Mboa Info
6. Radio Campus
7. The Eden Newspaper
8. La Nouvelle Expression newspaper
9. Le messenger newspaper.
10. Mutation Newspaper