



Plan International
West Africa Regional Office
Immeuble Seydi Djamil
Av. Cheikh Anta Diop x Rue Leo
Frobenius - Fann Résidence

BP: 21121 Dakar Senegal
Tel: (221) 33 869 74 30
Fax: (221) 33 825 84 67
www.plan-international.org

TALKING POINTS

More and better is needed for Children in conflicts and crises in Africa

June 16, 2016

- In a conflicts and disasters prone region, Plan International acknowledges the 2016 Day of African Child theme as an opportunity to flag the unbearable situation that millions of children are living every day. It is time to mainstream child protection into the continental peace and security agenda.
- 40 years after Soweto massacre, on June 16th 1976, and 25 years after the institution of the Day of African Child, the West Africa region is still experiencing multiple crisis affecting communities and child rights to life, food, health, protection, education and economic opportunities.
- The ACERWC¹ has identified six recurrent violations of Child rights during conflicts and crisis: killing and maiming of children, recruitment and manipulation of both boys and girls by armed groups; abduction of children; sexual violence on both female and male children; no access to universal education; denial of humanitarian access for children; attacks against essential services facilities such as schools or hospitals.
- It is also necessary to draw attention on girls' specific vulnerabilities in crisis, when often coping mechanisms expose them to sexual exploitation, forced migration, exploitation and child marriage. They also face challenges to access basic sexual and reproductive health services.
- Plan International urges African Union, governments, donors, agencies to reinforce partnership and coordination in order to anticipate and respond adequately to child rights violations in particular girls.
- Plan International is also calling for more attention and commitment to under-reported and underfunded situations as in Nigeria where OCHA estimates that 5.5 million people are in need of protection including 2.5 million children. It is also known that the malnutrition rate is getting higher every day while security, low donor engagement and lack of safe access prevent humanitarian organisations to give tailored responses.
- Other crises are mistakenly considered as over like in the former affected Ebola countries or in Central Africa Republic. Still children and youth, in particular girls are in needs of healthcare,

¹ African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

[Type text]

psychological support, protection against diverse abuses, access to education and economic opportunities. No recovery or development is possible without investing in children and girls.

- These conflicts and crisis often have a regional dimension as it impacts on cross border area such as the Lake Chad. In Cameroun, for instance, Plan International is responding to the refugees flux from both Nigeria and Central Africa Republic.
- Plan International calls for a regional programmatic response putting emphasis on children and youth rights to realise their rights in safety and dignity in a protective environment.
- Recurrent and slow onset disasters also affect children and need to be addressed in a consistent and holistic way. In the Sahel, malnutrition remains an issue and children are dying because of it in Niger, Mali, Senegal, Mauritania, Gambia and Chad. The last PREJEC notice states that 9.5 million people are in need of food assistance and livelihoods. According to OCHA, in Mali only, 709.000 children from 6 to 59 months are malnourished.
- In 2016, Plan International has been responding to more than 20 different scale crisis situations in the region with targeted lifesaving interventions and focus on Child Protection, Education in Emergencies and Youth Economic Empowerment. More than 60 million USD has been mobilised for humanitarian interventions.
- The organisation continues to implement long term development interventions in 14 countries in West Africa to support girls and boys in communities in building their resilience capacities to anticipate, respond and overcome adversity.