

The Donors Working Group on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

Brussels, Belgium, 31 May 2005 –

The fifth annual Donor's Working Group on Female Genital Mutilation/Female Genital Cutting (FGM/FGC) meeting ended Tuesday with renewed commitment to closer donor coordination and a pilot plan for action focused on a few African countries.

Over the course of the two day meeting, 18 representatives of 10 multilateral, bilateral, and private foundations exchanged approaches, ideas, information, and current research to create a common agenda. On the first day, Lieve Fransen, Head of Human and Social Development of the European Commission, noted "some think this practice does not exist any more. They are wrong. FGM/C must be part of poverty reduction strategies. There is no reason why we should be living with two million new girls being mutilated each year. We need financing, leadership, and political will."

The donor's group renewed their commitment to stop the practice in all countries in the world where FGM/C occurs. They also identified a handful of countries where various donors are supporting national and community efforts and where greater coordination efforts will be undertaken to accelerate progress toward the abandonment of FGM/C. Focus countries are: Djibouti, Somalia, Mali, Sudan, Burkina Faso, Senegal, The Gambia, and Kenya.

FGM/C Donor Working Group members came from WHO, the World Bank, USAID, the Public Welfare Foundation, UNICEF, GTZ, KfW, and the Italian Cooperation. The Donor's Working Group is a network of public and private agencies from around the world that include in their strategy the provision of funding for efforts to end FGM/C. Its members approach this strategic direction with a wide range of concerns, priorities, and strategies but share the common desire to enhance their effectiveness as donors. The group met in Brussels to highlight the need for more commitment and funding for ending the practice of FGM/C. Although the European Union has contributed to the effort, the Donor's Working Group has issued a call for increased funding and support.

The meeting was made possible in collaboration with the European Parliament through ALDE MEP Emma Bonino, who is particularly active in ending this practice. In concertation with Governments and civil society in the Afro-Arab world, she energetically advocates for the ratification of the Maputo Protocol - the first pan-African instrument for African women's rights - with accompanying measures on drafting and implementing national legislations to ban FGM/C.