



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## To end child marriage, invest in a skilled 'GirlForce' says Regional Network of The Children and Young People Trust on International Day of the Girl

11 October, 2018

[Harare] – As the world celebrates International Day of the Girl on 11 October, RNCYPT is calling for greater investments to improve girls' education, skills, and job prospects in Zimbabwe, and stressed that increasing the economic productivity of girls is critical to ending child marriage.

Irene Mucheni, Programmes Officer Child Rights for RNCYPT, said that more attention needs to be given to providing girls with job-relevant skills and training to participate in the workforce or launch their own businesses.

Mucheni "Poverty is a key driver of child marriage, and girls from poor families more likely to become child brides than those from the richest households. If we really want to tackle poverty and end child marriage we must give girls the tools they need to invest in themselves. That means providing them with the quality education and training they need to earn an income and create a better future for themselves and their family," Mucheni said.

However, increasing girls' participation in the workforce will require addressing the "many barriers" to decent work they face, including child marriage, early motherhood and gender-based violence, added Irene Mucheni.

Every year, 12 million girls are married globally before the age of 18, depriving them of their rights to education, health and a life of their choosing. Approximately 1 in 3 girls in Zimbabwe are married before their 18th birthday.

Evidence shows that girls who attend secondary school are three times less likely to be child brides. They also have better economic prospects, fewer and healthier children, and are more likely to ensure that their own children are not married.

Lakshmi Sundaram, Executive Director of *Girls Not Brides*, a global partnership of over 1000 civil society organisations committed to ending child marriage, said: "Investing in efforts to end child marriage isn't just the right thing to do – it's also smart economics. When girls are educated instead of being married young, and have opportunities to earn an income, they are more likely to lead happier, healthier lives, and to contribute to the growth and development of their communities. Ending child marriage has to be a critical part of creating a 'GirlForce' of empowered girls, and to help ensure we meet our global development goals."

Under the theme, ***With Her: A Skilled GirlForce***, International Day of the Girl will highlight the importance of providing girls around the world with the skills and training they need to secure decent work or start a business.

## ENDS ##

***With Her: A Skilled GirlForce***

For more information, or to arrange interviews, please contact Nyasha Simon Dick, Communications and Advocacy Officer, RNCYPT: [n.simon@rncypt.org](mailto:n.simon@rncypt.org) +263718917137

#### Notes to editors

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RNCYPT is a youth led organisation founded in 2012 to advance and promote the participation of children and young people in governance and other related issues that affect the young generation.

[www.rncypt.org](http://www.rncypt.org)

Regional Network of The Children and Young People Trust is a member of *Girls Not Brides*, a global partnership of more than 1000 civil society organisations from over 97 countries committed to ending child marriage and enabling girls to fulfil their potential. For more information visit

[www.girlsnotbrides.org](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org)