

Gambia: YPM to Stage Inter- Generational Dialogue Forum

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The Young People in the Media, The Gambia in partnership with Unicef Banjul Office and UNIQUE FM radio Station, will on Sunday, March 6th hold an inter-generational dialogue forum at the front ground of UNIQUE FM radio Station along Garba Jahumpa Road, Fajara, as part of activities marking the International Children's Day of Broadcasting.

It is a day when broadcasters air quality programming for and about children, but more importantly, they allow children to be part of the programming and production process, to talk about their hopes, dreams, fears and challenges in life. TV and radio play a vital role in raising awareness of children's rights issues and a critical role in shaping children's lives.

Ms. Fatou Camara, chairperson, Board of Director's, Young People in the Media, explained that ICDB is a joint initiative of Unicef and the International Academy of Television, Arts & Sciences. Every year, thousands of broadcasters in more than a 100 countries take part in the day, celebrating it in ways that are as unique and special as children themselves. Television and radio broadcasters continue to mark the International Children's Day of Broadcasting with distinctive and dynamic programming produced in their own countries.

The proprietress of I Media Company added that young people in The Gambia look to this day to showcase their talents on diverse areas, and this has earned The Gambia recognition to win the Unicef Regional ICDB award for West and Central Africa for two consecutive years. She expressed deep appreciation and gratitude to the government under the dynamic and visionary leadership of President Jammeh for creating a child-friendly environment for Gambian children and young people over the years.

She noted that ICDB was created to give exposure to issues of children's rights and protection in the media.

Youth participation and expression are also rights and are an integral part of adolescent development. Broadcasters have the chance to empower young people by giving them media skills and putting their voices on the air. This shows other young people that they too can have a voice and shows the world young people's thoughts about their lives and communities.

Abdou Jatta, Unicef/Speak Africa Youth spokesperson for Gambia said it is important for young people to see and hear their peers expressing who they are and what being a girl or boy means to them. The outspoken young Gambian child rights advocate added that ICDB provides a platform to discover youth opinions, see their perspectives and listen to their stories. "There is no 'one' answer to what it means to be a girl or boy. As youth if we see others in different roles, with different dreams, it is

an inspiration," he said. The dialogue Forum will attract 250 young people from various schools, as well as children and youth organisations.

Kaddijatou Fofana, president of YPM noted that there is so much about this world that young people need to learn - from history to cultural norms and values, and it is important to tell all these stories in a way that sparks young people's interests and invites them to join in the conversation. Ms Fofana maintained that "After 16 successful years, we continue to view ICDB as an innovative way to increase children's participation in the broadcasting industry". She stressed that the success of ICDB hinges not only on the support of broadcasters, but also the participation of children, adding that when young people's voices are heard, the benefits are exponential.

The Honourable minister of Health and Social Welfare, Fatim Badjie, will serve as the Keynote Speaker. Other dignitaries will be Dr. Meritxell Relaño Deputy Rep and Officer-in-Charge of the Unicef Country Office; Hon Fatou Mass Jobe-Njie, minister of Tourism and Cultur; Honourable Sheriff Gomez, Youth & Sports minister; director of Social Welfare, Mrs. Fanta Bai Secka; Adelaide Sosseh veteran educationalist; Madam Isha Fofana, proprietress of Mama Africa Arts Gallery; Papa Yusufa Njie, proprietor of UNIQUE Solutions; Lamin Manga, properitor of UNIQUE FM; Madam Oumou Taal, National director of SOS Children's Village; Mr. Njundu Drammeh National, coordinator of Child Protection Alliance; and Mrs. Manneh, head teacher, Marina Junior School, amongst other dignitaries.

In honour of the 22nd Anniversary of the CRC, Unicef calls for broadcasters around the world to invite young people into the studio and on the air to share their opinions and access their rights to media and expression. In joining the network of broadcasters celebrating the ICDB in 2011 and tune in to Kids UNICEF will award the International Children's Day of Broadcasting Award to honour television and radio broadcasters who capture the spirit of the ICDB.

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