



## SAHEL WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND PROJECT (SWEDD)

### Regional Workshop for Experience Sharing on the Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women.

#### PRESS RELEASE

**Douala, Cameroon- 14th November 2022** : As part of the Sahel Women Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) Project, Cameroon will host a “Regional Workshop for Sharing Experiences on the Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women” from November 14th to 16th, 2022 at Star Land Hotel Douala. This workshop is hosted at the national level by the Country Management Unit of the SWEDD project with the technical assistance of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). It will bring together representatives of the technical bodies of the nine (09) project implementation countries, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad; the République of Congo, neighbour to Cameroon, and soon to join the SWEDD; as well as technical and financial partners such as the World Bank, the West African Health Organization and UNFPA.

The Sahel Women Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) Project is a regional initiative aimed at strengthening the level of empowerment of women and adolescent girls with a view to accelerating the demographic transition in West and Central Africa. Launched in November 2015, the SWEDD brought together in its first phase, seven (7) countries which are Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte D'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad. It scaled up when the second phase started in 2020 by integrating Cameroon and Guinea. Phase three is currently underway with Congo, Gambia, Senegal, and Togo set to join the SWEDD.

The review of the first phase of the SWEDD Project confirmed that its interventions are adequate responses to the needs of girls and women and constitute an effective contribution to the countries' efforts to achieve gender equality and sustainable development. For its second phase of implementation (2020 – 2024), UNFPA intends to support countries by capitalizing on the previous achievements.

To this end, this regional workshop has as general objective to strengthen the capacities of key actors in the SWEDD countries, in particular Benin, Cameroon and Guinea, to effectively manage women's empowerment programs such as Safe Spaces, Husbands' Clubs and Future Husbands' Clubs based on minimum standards, lessons learned and experiences across countries. The workshop will be dedicated to the transfer of skills, learning between countries with the support of experts and experienced SWEDD managers.

The SWEDD Project, whose main targets are adolescent girls and young women vulnerable to early marriage, pregnancy and dropping out of school, improves their life skills, their knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights, strengthens their retention in secondary school, expands their economic opportunities, makes reproductive health products and qualified health personnel available, and promotes political commitment to the demographic dividend.

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