



PressInfo

Graça Machel and Nelson Mandela launched a terre des hommes campaign against child abuse in Maputo

Support also comes from Nobel Prize Winner Desmond Tutu

Maputo, June 16, 2002. A magnificent start for the Southern African Campaign against Child Abuse and Child Trafficking that has been co-ordinated by FDC, the Mozambican Foundation of Community Development:

The launch was joined by participants from most of the Southern African countries, namely Angola, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique, who are partners in this campaign initiated by the Southern Africa Co-ordinating Office of terre des hommes.

5.000 Children from Maputo and the surrounding province at 8:00 in the morning started in front of the Mozambican National Assembly for a one hour march which led them through the city centre to the Independence square.

Dressed with the campaign T-shirt saying "Stop Abuso de Menores" (Stop Child Abuse) the Mozambican human rights activist Graça Machel – who together with Desmond Tutu is the patron of the campaign - was heading the column of three kilometers, motivating the children a lot. The students from 16 schools, who arrived as early as 7:00 clock with busses from the neighbouring cities presented their posters and banners including the following demands:

"We want a law, which protects us against abuse, prostitution and trafficking", "United against the violation of children's rights" and "Stop trafficking of children for all purposes".

The launch of the campaign was also supported by the Mozambican Prime Minister Pascal Mocumbi, who admitted in his speech that the Mozambican legislation is not sufficient to protect the rights of the children. He obviously was so much moved by the demands of the children that he openly promised to personally give his support for a better legislation on this issue in Mozambique.

In a big surprise Nelson Mandela joined his wife Graça Machel in the launch when the event has just started. He delivered an impressive speech in which he suggested, that "in every village and in every street, there should be a child who helps other children if they are molested by someone." He continued: "There are enough intelligent and brave children in Africa who could take up their cases in their one hands and could help the victims to report their cases to the police."

terre des hommes Germany together with FDC (Foundation of Community Development), Mozambique launched this regional campaign on the 16th June 2002, the Day of the African Child. A day which commemorates the uprising of the children of



Soweto in 1976 against the Apartheid in which more than 200 of them died. "As much as the children from Soweto contributed to the fight against Apartheid in South Africa in those days, as much can the African Children of today fight for their rights to be respected as human beings" stated Ulrich Tietze, the Regional Co-ordinator for terre des hommes in Maputo.

Heike Spielmans, Head of Communication of terre des hommes Germany said in her speech: "The Southern African Campaign is a corner stone of the International Campaign against Child Trafficking, which terre des hommes launched in five regions of the world in October 2201. This campaign has already gained success in India, South East Asia and South America, and its demands will be an key element of the Southern African Campaign in the near future."

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Ulrich Tietze

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