



For Immediate Release,

## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

### Call to End Stigmatization and Discrimination of People Living with Albinism

#### *Marking Albinism Awareness Day in Tanzania*

**Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2016; Dar es Salaam:** The Government, the United Nations, the European Union, and a number of embassies and high commissions came together with the Tanzania Albinism Society to mark the International Albinism Awareness Day at an event held at the Mnazi Mmoja grounds. The event drew attention to this hereditary genetic condition which all too often gives rise to unjustifiable discrimination.

Speaking at the event, the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Mr. Alvaro Rodriguez, called for an end to stigmatization. Echoing the UN Secretary General, he stated that, *"The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda pledges to leave no one behind. This includes people with albinism. The cycle of attacks, discrimination and poverty must be broken. I call on all countries and stakeholders to recognize that human rights apply to all people everywhere, including people with albinism. I urge them to make special efforts to end the discrimination that threatens the wellbeing, health and even the lives of people with albinism, and to target them with programmes that will enable them to play a full part in society."*

Mr. Rodriguez also called for greater protection for this "exceptionally vulnerable" community in Tanzania, stating that the United Nations in Tanzania will keep supporting the government to ensure that people living with albinism don't have to undergo discrimination, stigma and social exclusion. He also congratulated the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for all its efforts to address the challenges of People Living with Albinism.

The European Union (EU), together with its Member States in Tanzania, has been at the forefront to condemn killings and harming of people living with albinism. The rights of people with albinism are human rights; and human rights are at the heart of the EU's principles and objectives.

The Head of Delegation of the European Union to Tanzania and the EAC, Ambassador Roeland van de Geer, reiterated that the European Union remains deeply concerned by discrimination and violence suffered by persons with albinism in several countries and regions, including Tanzania, stating that, *"The European Union remains determined to promote respect for and protection of all human rights for all. This includes People with Albinism whose most basic right - the right to life - is at stake for beliefs that are plain wrong and the result of abysmal ignorance."*

*"Persons with albinism are at risk and need to be protected without further discriminating them. However, the European Union believes that death penalty for the killers and*

*perpetrators of violence against people with albinism cannot be the solution. In order to address the root causes of the problem, we urge the Government of Tanzania to raise awareness throughout society, including at the family level, regarding Persons with albinism, and to foster respect for their rights and dignity.”*

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**Note to Editors:**

In 2013, the United Nations’ General Assembly adopted a resolution denouncing attacks on, and discrimination against, people with Albinism. The resolution furthermore calls on States to take all measures necessary to ensure their effective protection. In 2014, the United Nations’ General Assembly proclaimed 13 June as International Albinism Awareness Day.

The European Union believes that death penalty for the killers and perpetrators of violence against people with albinism cannot be the response, as the death penalty has not proven to be an effective deterrent. It represents an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity and miscarriage of justice – which is inevitable in any legal system – is irreversible.

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