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**\*\*\*Media Alert\*\*\***

## **AGE Africa Joins Hillary Clinton, Chelsea Clinton and Julia Gillard in Making a Historic Commitment to Girls' Education**

On Wednesday at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Clinton Global Initiative, Advancing Girls' Education in Africa (AGE Africa) joined 30 other organizations in making a historic \$600 million collaborative commitment to girls' education. Spearheaded by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Chelsea Clinton and Julia Gillard, Distinguished Fellow at the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution, 'CHARGE:' Collaborative Harnessing Ambition and Resources for Girls' Education, involves 30 civil society organizations, companies, governments and bilateral agencies and will *serve 14 million girls in the next 5 years.*

"We know when girls have access to quality education in both primary and secondary schools, cycles of poverty are broken, economies grow, glass ceilings crack and potential is unleashed," said Secretary Clinton. "The scale of this commitment matches the gravity of the challenge. Ensuring every girl receives a quality secondary education will take all of us, governments, civil society, the private sector, multilateral organizations, the entire international community working together."

In response to the announcement, AGE Africa's Executive Director, Aubryn Allyn Sidle underscored the importance of CHARGE: "AGE Africa is incredibly excited to be included in this historic commitment to improve educational opportunities for girls globally," Aubryn said. "The CHARGE Collaborative's focus on secondary education is critical to ensuring that the gains made for girls in the last 14 years in primary schooling are not wasted. There are 'glass ceilings' for girls at the post-primary level especially in countries like Malawi—girls can see their future educational opportunities but cannot access them."

Malawi is a country that has particularly poor statistics regarding girls' educational attainment. Nationwide, less than 27% of girls enroll in secondary school, and less than one quarter of those who enroll will graduate.

AGE Africa's mission is to provide life-changing educational opportunities for young women in Malawi. Specifically, AGE Africa targets rural and impoverished Malawian girls with programs that address a holistic range of girls' needs to help them complete secondary school and transition successfully into life beyond. Through CHARGE, AGE Africa will commit to reaching 25% of all girls enrolled in *rural* community day secondary schools in Malawi over the course of 5 years by scaling up its core mentoring program, *Creating Healthy Approaches To Success* (CHATS). CHATS Girls Clubs utilize peer-to-peer facilitation, leadership, self-advocacy, career guidance and life skills education as tools to address the multiple causes of dropout and to give young women viable alternatives to early marriage and early pregnancy.

"We are very excited to be working with the Government of Malawi on this," said Aubryn in an interview on Wednesday. "In particular we are grateful to the First Lady of Malawi, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for their support and for their continued commitment to improving educational outcomes for girls. We are so lucky to be working in an environment where there is a deep and abiding commitment to this issue. AGE Africa looks forward to helping the government achieve its educational goals, particularly those laid out in the Girls Education Strategy released this past spring."

To facilitate and expand the work of CHARGE, *No Ceilings: The Full Participation Project* – a Clinton Foundation initiative led by Secretary Clinton and Chelsea Clinton – in partnership with Brookings Center for Universal Education, will commit to convene the collaborative, track progress, and enable outreach to future partners. Last year at CGI, Secretary Clinton and Chelsea Clinton announced the launch of No Ceilings with a call to fulfill the unfinished business of the 21st century, and make an evidence-based case for the full participation of women and girls around the globe. As No Ceilings evaluates data on the status of women and girls over the last 20 years, it's evident that ensuring equal and adequate education for girls, through secondary school and beyond, is essential for improving the health, stability, and prosperity of communities and countries around the world.

Located in Washington DC, AGE Africa's mission is to provide life-changing opportunities to young women in Malawi through targeted initiatives in education, mentoring, and leadership development. To learn more visit [www.ageafrica.org](http://www.ageafrica.org).