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*Half a billion people in Africa are deprived of a legal identity. Among them are more than 95 million children under age 5.
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Launch of the Urgency Identity Africa fund for the promotion of birth registration at the civil registration office

The Urgency Identity Africa fund promotes the creation of a culture of civil registration of births shared by all stakeholders, from parents to the state.

Paris, Brussels, London, September 16, 2020 - On this day September 16, inspired by the Sustainable Development Goal (16.9) "By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration", several civil society actors are launching the Urgency Identity Africa Fund, a non-profit organisation of general interest under the auspices of the King Baudouin Foundation. Co-founded by Mes Abdoulaye HARISSOU and Amadou Moustapha NDIAYE, Urgency Identity Africa will start its activities in two pilot countries (Senegal and Togo).

Urgency Identity Africa intends to coalesce philanthropic initiatives and the patronage of individuals and legal entities in order to finance actions enabling the consolidation of civil registration in Africa and the drastic reduction in the number of children without a legal identity.

To date, less than half of all births in Africa are declared and registered at civil registration. This will leave more than 115 million children under the age of five without a legal identity by 2030, if current trends continue, according to UNICEF.

Unfortunately, these children are citizens without rights in their own country, hence the term "phantom children". This lack of legal identity constitutes a major risk in political, economic, social and security terms because it exposes these "phantom children" to the worst abuses (early and/or forced marriage of young girls, illegal adoption, sexual violence, child prostitution, child soldiers...).

Extreme poverty, lack of information, the weight of tradition, armed conflicts, and the current COVID-19 pandemic, just to name a few, are major obstacles to the consolidation of civil registration in Africa. This therefore creates a real obstacle to the success of Sustainable Development Goal 16.9.

On the occasion of this launch, the president of Urgency Identity Africa, Maître Abdoulaye HARISSOU, declared: "September 16 represents a symbolic step for the Urgency Identity Africa fund. Co-author of the book "The phantom children"*, I am determined to help more children to have a legal identity so that each new birth becomes an opportunity for this child, his family, his country and the African continent".

At the head of the operational team, the Executive Director of Urgency Identity Africa, André Franck AHOYO, declared: "By working hand in hand with African governments, we wish to pool our energies, experience and expertise to significantly reduce the number of phantom children by 2030".

* « *Phantom children* » of Laurent Dejoie and Abdoulaye Harissou, Albin Michel Editions, 2014

About the Urgency Identity Africa fund

The Urgency Identity Africa fund is a non-profit organisation of general interest, placed under the auspices of the King Baudouin Foundation. Urgency Identity Africa aims to increase the number of birth registrations in Africa by raising awareness and carrying out, or financing, local actions to reduce the number of children without legal identity.

For more information, visit www.uiafrica.org



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About the King Baudouin Foundation

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