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Albino people in DR Congo suffer discrimination and exclusion - UN agency

Albino people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) face discrimination and marginalization in their communities, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is sponsoring a workshop to promote their rights.

“They have trouble getting work, in accessing adequate health care, in finding marriage partners and in entering education,” UNDP said in a statement at the launch of a workshop bringing together 250 albino people and others in Kisangani.

“Albino children do not feel loved by their parents, brothers and sisters. Albino women are subject to discrimination from other women. Women who give birth to albino babies are often mocked or rejected.”

UNDP, along with the Association for the Protection and Development of Albino People in Orientale province, organized the workshop with the aim of promoting the issue among development organizations and of launching an appeal for funding.

According to a 2007 study in Kisangani, nearly half of parents of albino children felt humiliated at the time they gave birth. About two-thirds of parents said that specific health interventions for albino children were expensive, and half said their children had serious vision problems. However, 83 per cent said their children did as well at school as any other children.

UNDP said that albino people are included in its programme to promote and protect minorities and supported moves to grant the marginalized group the same opportunities to achieve sustainable development.