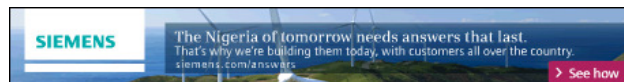




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## FG to defend albinos, vulnerable groups

By Kemi Ashefon

Sunday, 22 May 2011

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The Federal Government is set to establish a ministerial committee to evaluate the challenges faced by albinos in the country.

Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Iyom Josephine Anenih, who made this known in Abuja said that the committee would advise the president on strategic plan of action that would foster lasting solutions to issues affecting albinos and other persons with disabilities.

The minister, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, Alhaji Idris Kuta, stated this during a visit by the Albino Foundation led by its founder, Mr. Jake Epelle.

He said Nigeria as a member of the United Nations and the African Union was signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which the Child Rights Act, 2003 upholds and the African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

"To fulfill Nigeria's obligation to implementing the provisions of these conventions, we have, I believe, a statutory obligation to protect the rights of all Nigerian children irrespective of class, creed or colour of their skin," the minister noted.

She cautioned those that discriminate against or abuse albinos to desist from such acts or be brought to book.

Epelle said, "God has been faithful to us. We are the first organisation in the world to get the attention of the United Nations. We have been able through UNICEF to secure 35 scholarships."

Making a further appeal for the protection of the rights of albino children in schools, he said, "Children with albinism must be kept at the front of the class, they must not be made a subject of derision by their teachers and the people including students at every level of education."

He, therefore, called for closer collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to create the much needed awareness and enlightenment to address all issues affecting the rights of people especially children living with albinism.

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