



Background Paper

Committee: UN Women

Topic A: Addressing Child and Forced Marriage

Chairs: Jorge Bracho Tébar and Alejandra Borda Esquivel

Child marriage consists of the union of two people in which one or both are under 18 years old. These marriages are arranged for various reasons the most common being; due to cultural and traditional beliefs, poverty and lack of education, gender inequality, and family convenience. This issue needs to be addressed immediately since its a violation of girls rights and it affects their education, future opportunities, and health. It also obstructs the accomplishment of some of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The UN Women Committee is alarmed by this issue since it affects the lives of 1 in every 5 girls is married before the age of 18. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women is fully aware of the importance of finding a resolution to this issue and address the elimination of child marriage by 2030.

On September 27, 2013, The United Nations Human Rights Council condemned forced marriage by adopting a resolution, co-sponsored by more than 100 countries, the resolution addresses the elimination of child and forced marriage. NGO's like Girls Not Brides, the Sexual Rights Initiative, Plan International and YWCA have taken action to stop child and forced marriage occurring. Furthermore, countries with high rates of child and forced marriage like Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Yemen, Honduras, and South Sudan adopted this resolution. The countries with the highest numbers of child marriage are; India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Pakistan, Mexico, Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rates of forced and child marriage around the world are the following; Sub-Saharan Africa, 38%, South Asia 30%, Latin America 25%, the Caribbean, the Middle East, and North Africa rates are all 17% and Eastern Europe and Central Asia both have a rate of 11%. In 2011, the committee of UN Women came up with an approach that consisted of three areas that they were going to direct their attention towards. Firstly, providing health and protection support to women and girls who have experienced or are experiencing a child or forced marriage. Secondly, to promote gender equality and prevent violence in order to have a respectful male with female relationships. Lastly, supporting the initiatives to end

violence against women and encourage youth leadership. In order to achieve the latter, the committee along with others such as UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) and UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) are getting involved in supporting and leading global initiatives. The end of sexual violence had been encouraged by the Together for Girls Initiative. Fostering the progress of girls and women in developing countries is being worked on by the UN Adolescent Girls Task Force. Helping The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in the design of an informal education curriculum which will educate the girls on these topics as well as the reasons why forced marriage occurs and the preventions. Between October 23-25 2018, African leaders met in Kenya at The Africa Youth Conference, which addressed and prioritized the investment in young women, opening up spaces to let them contribute to political participation. UN Women has organized consultations and dialogues which took place at the end of 2018 and continued into January 2019 the aim of these meetings is to lead to an Africa-wide pledge in February 2019 at AU Heads of State Summit in Addis Ababa.

This issue is crucial to address because it disrupts the life of girls and women. It ends their education, health and violates their rights as human beings. Although child marriage might mean the end of poverty or the lifting of a female's burden on her family when she becomes the responsibility of her husband, it is not acceptable. Twelve million girls under the age of 18 get married each year. That is almost 1 every 2 seconds. Addressing this can bring us benefits like, the improvement in women's rights and it would decrease violence towards women and girls. We are aware that this topic will take time to be solved since it is embedded in many the traditions of many cultures, but we can come up with solutions, to decrease it, regulate it and possibly even eradicate it.

Bibliography

“Child Marriage.” *What is Child Marriage*, <https://plan-international.org>

Nisha, varla. “World Report 2016: Rights Trends in Ending Child Marriage.” *Ending Child Marriage*, Human Rights Watch, 27 Jan. 2016, www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/ending-child-marriage.

“Untying the Knot: 10 Worst Places for Child Marriage.” *World Vision*, World Vision, 25 July 2018, www.worldvision.org/child-protection-news-stories/10-worst-places-child-marriage.

Child Marriage around the World.” *Child Marriage around the World*, UNICEF, www.unicef.org/stories/child-marriage-around-world.

“Child Marriage.” *Child Marriage around the World*, United Nations Population Fund, www.unfpa.org/child-marriage.

Girls Not Brides. “Why Does Child Marriage Happen?” *Girls Not Brides*, The Idea Bureau, www.girlsnotbrides.org/why-does-it-happen/.