

**MULTILATERAL FORA**  
**EXAMPLES OF CHILD, EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE REFERENCES**  
**As at 16 June 2021**

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## 1. COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

### CSW65/2021 Agreed Conclusions

23. The Commission strongly condemns all forms of violence against women and girls, which is rooted in historical and structural inequalities and unequal power relations between men and women. It reiterates that violence against women and girls in all its forms and manifestations, in public and private spheres, including sexual and gender-based violence, such as sexual harassment, domestic violence, gender-related killings, including femicide, and harmful practices, such as **child, early and forced marriage** and female genital mutilation, are pervasive, underrecognized and underreported, particularly at the community level.

31. The Commission expresses concern that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on women and girls and is deepening pre-existing inequalities that perpetuate multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, as well as racism, stigmatization and xenophobia, and that it has further exacerbated vulnerabilities in their social and economic situations, including their access to essential health-care services and access to education, especially of girls who have been particularly at risk of dropping out of and not returning to schools, as well as their safety, well-being and livelihood. It further expresses deep concern over the increased demand for unpaid care and domestic work and the reported surge of all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, during confinement, as well as harmful practices, such as, **child, early and forced marriage** and female genital mutilation. It further expresses deep concern that these disproportionate impacts compound existing obstacles to women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life.

42. The Commission reaffirms the right to education for all women and girls, and stresses that equal access to inclusive, equitable and high-quality education significantly contributes to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by providing them with opportunities, knowledge, capacity, aptitudes, skills, ethical values and understanding to enable women's full and effective participation in public life. It recognizes that, despite gains in providing access to education, girls are still more likely than boys to remain excluded from education and that gender-specific barriers to girls' equal enjoyment of their right to education include the feminization of poverty, child labour undertaken by girls, **child, early and forced marriage**, female genital mutilation, early and repeated pregnancies, all forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence and harassment on the way to and from and at school, and bullying and cyberbullying in their technology-mediated environment, the lack of safe and adequate sanitation facilities, including for menstrual hygiene management, the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work performed by girls, and gender stereotypes and negative social norms that lead families and communities to place less value on the education of girls than that of boys, which may influence the parents' decision on allowing girls to attend school.

61. (s) Eliminate harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and **child, early and forced marriage**, which may have long-term effects on girls' and women's lives, health and bodies, including increased vulnerability to violence and sexually transmitted diseases, and negatively affect opportunities to participate in public life, and which continue to persist in all regions of the world despite the increase in national, regional and international efforts, including by empowering all women and girls, working with local communities to combat negative social norms that condone such practices and empowering parents and communities to abandon such practices, confronting

family poverty and social exclusion and ensuring that girls and women at risk or affected by these practices have access to social protection and public services, including education, and health care;

[CSW64/2020 Political Declaration on Beijing+25](#)

No specific reference to child, early or forced marriage, only to harmful practices:

11. (g) Eliminating, preventing and responding to all forms of violence and harmful practices against all women and girls, in the public and private spheres, including in digital contexts, as well as human trafficking and modern slavery and other forms of exploitation and ensuring access to justice, and the provision of support services, including legal, health and social, to all women victims of violence;

[CSW63/2019 Agreed Conclusions](#)

13. The Commission strongly condemns all forms of violence against all women and girls, which is rooted in historical and structural inequality and unequal power relations between men and women. It reiterates that violence against women and girls in all its forms and manifestations, in public and private spheres, including sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence and harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, are pervasive, underrecognized and underreported, particularly at the community level. It expresses deep concern that women and girls may be particularly vulnerable to violence because of multidimensional poverty, limited or lack of access to justice, effective legal remedies and services, including protection, rehabilitation, reintegration, and to health-care services. It re-emphasizes that violence against women and girls is a major impediment to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and that it violates and impairs or nullifies their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

29. The Commission recognizes that, despite gains in providing access to education, girls are still more likely than boys to remain excluded from education. It also recognizes that among the gender-specific barriers to girls' equal enjoyment of their right to education are the feminization of poverty, child labour undertaken by girls, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, early and repeat pregnancies, all forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence and harassment on the way to and from and at school, in their technology-mediated environment, the lack of safe and adequate sanitation facilities, including for menstrual hygiene management, the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work performed by girls and gender stereotypes and negative social norms that lead families and communities to place less value on the education of girls than that of boys and may influence the decision of parents to allow girls to attend school.

47 (i) Eliminate harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage, which may have long-term effects on girls' and women's lives, health and bodies, including increased vulnerability to violence and sexually transmitted diseases, and which continue to persist in all regions of the world despite the increase in national, regional and international efforts, including by empowering all women and girls, working with local communities to combat negative social norms that condone such practices and empowering parents and communities to abandon such practices, confronting family poverty and social exclusion and ensuring that girls and women at risk or affected by these practices have access to social protection and public services, including education and health care;

### [CSW62/2018 Agreed Conclusions](#)

21. The Commission recognizes that, despite gains in providing access to education, rural girls are still more likely than rural boys, and girls and boys in urban settings, to remain excluded from education, and recognizes also that among gender-specific barriers to girls' equal enjoyment of their right to education are the feminization of poverty, child labour undertaken by girls, **child, early and forced marriage**, female genital mutilation, early and repeat pregnancies, all forms of gender-based violence in and outside of school, including sexual violence and harassment on the way to and from, and at school, the lack of safe and adequate sanitation facilities, the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, and gender stereotypes and negative social norms that lead families and communities to place less value on the education of girls than that of boys

25. The Commission strongly condemns all forms of violence against all women and girls, which is rooted in historical and structural inequality and unequal power relations between men and women. It reiterates that violence against women and girls in all its forms and manifestations in public and private spheres, including sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence and harmful practices such as child, **early and forced marriage** and female genital mutilation, are pervasive, underrecognized and underreported, particularly at the community level. It expresses deep concern that women and girls in rural and remote areas may be particularly vulnerable to violence because of multidimensional poverty, limited or a lack of access to justice, to effective legal remedies and services, including protection, rehabilitation, and reintegration, and to health-care services. It re-emphasizes that violence against women and girls is a major impediment to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including those living in rural areas, and violates and impairs or nullifies their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

46. (h) Eliminate harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and **child, early and forced marriage**, which disproportionately affect women and girls in rural areas and may have long-term effects on girls' and women's lives, health and bodies, and which continue to persist in all regions of the world despite the increase in national, regional and international efforts, including by empowering all women and girls, working with local communities to combat negative social norms that condone such practices and empowering parents and communities to abandon such practices

### [CSW61/2017 Agreed Conclusions](#)

14. The Commission strongly condemns violence against women and girls in all its forms in public and private spaces, including harassment in the world of work, including sexual harassment, and sexual and gender-based violence, domestic violence, trafficking in persons and femicide, among others, as well as harmful practices such as **child, early and forced marriage** and female genital mutilation, and recognizes that these forms of violence are major impediments to the achievement of women's economic empowerment and their social and economic development, often resulting in, inter alia, absenteeism, missed promotions and job losses, thereby hampering women's ability to enter, advance and remain in the labour market and make contributions commensurate with their abilities, and also recognizes that such violence can impede economic independence and impose direct and indirect short- and long-term costs on society and individuals including, as relevant, lost economic output and the psychological and physical impact thereof, as well as expenses relating to health care, the legal sector, social welfare and specialized services, and further recognizes that women's economic autonomy can expand their options for leaving abusive relationships.

## 2. CEDAW

### **2013 General recommendation No. 29 on article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution)**

53. States parties are obligated to adopt laws of intestate succession that comply with the principles of the Convention. Such laws should ensure: Equal treatment of surviving females and males. That customary succession to use rights or title to land cannot be conditioned on forced marriage to a deceased spouse's brother (levirate marriage) or any other person, or on the existence or absence of minor children of the marriage.

### **1994 Generation Recommendation No. 21 13<sup>th</sup> Session on Equality in marriage and family relations**

2. Other conventions and declarations also confer great significance on the family and woman's status within it. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (General Assembly resolution 217/A (III)), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex), the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (resolution 1040 (XI), annex), the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (resolution 1763 A (XVII), annex) and the subsequent Recommendation thereon (resolution 2018 (XX)) and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women.

#### Article 16

1. States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same right to enter into marriage;

(b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

(c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;

(d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;

(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;

(h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

38. Some countries provide for different ages for marriage for men and women. As such provisions assume incorrectly that women have a different rate of intellectual development from men, or that their stage of physical and intellectual development at marriage is immaterial, these provisions should be abolished. In other countries, the betrothal of girls or undertakings by family members on their behalf is permitted. Such measures contravene not only the Convention, but also a woman's right freely to choose her partner.

#### **1992 Generation Recommendation No. 19 11<sup>th</sup> Session on Violence Against Women**

11. Traditional attitudes by which women are regarded as subordinate to men or as having stereotyped roles perpetuate widespread practices involving violence or coercion, such as family violence and abuse, forced marriage, dowry deaths, acid attacks and female circumcision. Such prejudices and practices may justify gender-based violence as a form of protection or control of women. The effect of such violence on the physical and mental integrity of women is to deprive them the equal enjoyment, exercise and knowledge of human rights and fundamental freedoms. While this comment addresses mainly actual or threatened violence the underlying consequences of these forms of gender-based violence help to maintain women in subordinate roles and contribute to the low level of political participation and to their lower level of education, skills and work opportunities.

### 3. HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

#### **HRC47/2021**

The resolution on child, early and forced marriage was expected to run, but is not currently listed.

[A/HRC/47/34](#) Implementation of the non-punishment principle Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children – **In May 2021, Australia (led by Home Affairs) submitted a report to the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material, which highlighted the intersection between forced marriage practices and the sale and sexual exploitation of children.**

#### **HRC44/2020**

[A/HRC/44/45/Add.1](#) Visit to Montenegro - Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children

[A/HRC/44/45](#) Trafficking in persons, especially women and children - Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children

#### **HRC43/2020**

Australia co-sponsored [Resolution 43/22](#) that renewed the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material.

#### **HRC41/2019**

Australia co-sponsored [Resolution 41/8](#) on child, early, and forced marriage and voted against hostile amendments to the text. Australia delivered a statement at action that outlined our opposition to attempts to narrow the scope of violence against women and girls addressed in the resolution and reiterated the significance of intimate partner violence in this particular context.

[A/HRC/41/46](#) Trafficking in persons, especially women and children - Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children

[A/HRC/41/46/Add.1](#) Visit to Nigeria - Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children

#### **HRC35/2017 [RES/35/16](#) Resolution on Child, early and forced marriage in humanitarian settings**

Recognizes that **child, early and forced marriage** constitutes a violation, abuse or impairment of human rights and a harmful practice

develop and implement holistic, comprehensive and coordinated responses, strategies and policies to prevent, respond to and eliminate **child, early and forced marriage**, including in humanitarian settings, and to support already married girls, adolescents and women

#### **HRC29/2015 [RES/29/8](#) Resolution on Strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage**

Strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate **child, early and forced marriage** The Human Rights Council, Guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International

**HRC29/2015 [RES/29/4](#) Resolution on the Elimination of discrimination against women**

discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations, and to guarantee women's equality in law and in practice in family life, in accordance with their respective international obligations and commitments by, inter alia: (a) Recognizing the equality of all family members before the law; (b) **Opposing all forms of marriage that constitute a violation of women's**

**HRC26/2014 [RES/26/15](#) Resolution on Accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: violence against women as a barrier to women's political and economic empowerment**

maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peacebuilding in line with relevant Security Council resolutions, including Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000 and related resolutions, Recognizing further that **child, early and forced marriage** continues to be an impediment to not only the economic, legal, health and social status of women and girls

**HRC27/2014 [RES/27/19](#) Resolution on Technical assistance and capacity-building for Yemen in the field of human rights**

accelerated efforts of the Government to improve birth registration with international assistance; 22. Welcomes the recommendation of the National Dialogue Conference calling for the establishment of a minimal age for marriage and the **criminalization of early, forced marriages**, also welcomes the efforts by the Government of Yemen to promote and protect the rights of children

**HRC27/2014 [RES/27/11](#) Resolution on the Preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and human rights**

inequalities, all forms of discrimination and violence against women, early childbearing, **early marriage**, poverty, malnutrition, harmful practices, lack of accessible and appropriate health-care services for all, information and education, and to pay particular attention to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, especially adolescent girls

**HRC24/2013 [RES/24/33](#) Resolution on Strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage: challenges, achievements, best practices and implementation gaps**

Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council

Strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate **child, early and forced marriage**: challenges, achievements

**HRC23/2013 [RES/23/22](#) Resolution on Technical assistance to Côte d'Ivoire in the field of human rights**

pluralism, the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the adoption of new norms of family law to provide for **equality between men and women in marriage**, which constitute important progress in strengthening the legislative framework and thus in promoting and protecting human rights and ending impunity

**HRC23/2013 [RES/23/21](#) Resolution on the Situation of human rights in Eritrea**

(f) To respect everyone's right to freedom of expression and to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief, and the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; (g) To enhance



the promotion and protection of women's rights, including by taking further measures to combat harmful practices, such as **early marriage** and female genital mutilation

**HRC23/2013 [RES/23/25](#) Resolution on Accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: preventing and responding to rape and other forms of sexual violence**

investigations and prosecutions for rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated on any ground against women and girls, and recognizing that a lack of accountability unacceptably reinforces social normalization of and tolerance for these crimes, Acknowledging that the **forced marriage of women and young girls** is a violation or an abuse of their human rights and makes them particularly vulnerable

**HRC22/2013 [RES/22/32](#) Resolution on the Rights of the Child: to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health**

all forms of bullying, child abuse and exploitation, domestic violence and neglect, including **early and forced marriage**, child trafficking, sale of children, child pornography, child prostitution and violence perpetrated by the security forces, law enforcement authorities, employees and officials in alternative care settings, detention centres or welfare institutions, including orphanages

**HRC19/2012 [RES/19/37](#) Resolution on the Rights of the Child**

labour, **early and forced marriage** and forced sterilization, including by addressing their root causes, to eliminate prenatal sex selection and to develop age-appropriate safe and confidential programmes and medical, social and psychological support services to assist girls who are subjected to violence and discrimination; (c) Promote gender equality and equal access to basic social services

**HRC17/2011 [RES/17/11](#) Resolution on Accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: ensuring due diligence in protection**

eliminating discrimination against women, **promoting gender equality, empowering women and promoting their full autonomy, including with regard to land, property, marriage and divorce**, child custody and inheritance, and to promote equal access to literacy, education, skills training and employment opportunities, political participation and representation, credit, agricultural extension

**HRC14/2010 [RES/14/12](#) Resolution on Accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: ensuring due diligence in prevention**

women and girls of all human rights, particularly those aimed at eliminating discrimination against women, **promoting gender equality, empowering women and promoting their autonomy, including with regard to land, property, marriage and divorce**, child custody and inheritance, and to promote equal access to literacy, education, skills training and employment opportunities, land, credit, agricultural

#### 4. UN SECURITY COUNCIL

##### **UNSC 8079<sup>th</sup> Meeting 21 October 2017 - Women Peace and Security – UNSG Report on Women and Peace and Security ([S/2017/861](#))**

(Page 41-43) Mr. Grant (Canada): I am pleased to speak first on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, an informal network of 51 interested Member States chaired by Canada, representing all five regional groups of the United Nations. I will then make brief remarks in my national capacity.

We are also appalled by acts of sexual violence, including rape, **child, early and forced marriage** and enslavement, including those committed by terrorist groups, such as Da'esh. In this regard, we welcome the recent adoption of resolution 2379 (2017), on accountability for the acts committed by Da'esh in Iraq. It is our hope that this is the first step in a process to ensure more comprehensive accountability. We highlight the importance of including specific expertise on gender and sexual violence to ensure the documentation of sexual violence as part of these efforts, as well as a focus on reducing stigma associated with survivors of sexual violence in conflict.

## 5. UNGA THIRD COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND CULTURAL ISSUES

At the UN General Assembly Third Committee, Australia has consistently co-sponsored the biannual resolution: Child, early, and forced marriage (most recently on 16 December 2020). The resolution will next be considered in August-December 2022 and Australia intends to continue our strong support for it.

### ***UNGA77/2022***

Child, early and forced marriage resolution will run again.

### ***UNGA76/2021***

*Not run*

### ***UNGA75/2020***

[A/RES/75/167](#) C.3 68 (a) A/75/PV.46 16 December 2020 GA/12304 without a vote A/75/474 DR II  
**Child, early and forced marriage**

United Nations A/RES/75/167 General Assembly Distr.: General 23 December 2020 20-17337 (E) 301220 \*2017337\* Seventy-fifth session Agenda item 68 (a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children: promotion and protection of the rights of children Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 2020 [on the report of the Third Committee (A/75/474, para. 33)] 75/167. Child, early and forced marriage The General Assembly, Reaffirming its resolutions 69/156 of 18 December 2014, 71/175 of 19 December 2016 and 73/153 of 17 December 2018 on child, early and forced marriage,

Recalling its resolutions 74/134 of 18 December 2019 on the girl child and 73/148 of 17 December 2018, entitled “Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: sexual harassment”, as well as Human Rights Council resolution 41/8 of 11 July 2019 on the consequences of child, early and forced marriage<sup>1</sup> and all other previous resolutions relating to child, early and forced marriage,

Guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 2 as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights<sup>3</sup> and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 4 the Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>5</sup> and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,<sup>6</sup> together with the relevant Optional Protocols thereto, as well as relevant human rights instruments, and recalling the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages,

Reaffirming the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 9 as well as the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,<sup>10</sup> the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 11 which marks its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2020, and the outcome documents of their review conferences, Taking note of the relevant agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women, Welcoming the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>12</sup> and noting the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda and the range of Goals and targets relevant to eliminating child, early and forced marriage, including target 5.3,

Taking note with appreciation of the ongoing United Nations Population Fund United Nations Children’s Fund Global Programme to End Child Marriage, as well as international, regional, national and subnational instruments, mechanisms and initiatives to end child, early and forced marriage,

including the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage, the Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Asia, the Joint Inter-Agency Programme to End Child Marriage and Early Unions in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Southern African Development Community Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage, and further encouraging coordinated approaches to action at all levels, Recognizing that child, early and forced marriage is a harmful practice that violates, abuses or impairs human rights and is linked to and perpetuates other harmful practices and human rights violations and that such violations have a disproportionately negative impact on women and girls, and underscoring the human rights obligations and commitments of States to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls and to prevent and eliminate the practice of child, early and forced marriage,

Recognizing also that social protection, education, adequate health care, nutrition, full access to clean water, including safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, skills development and the combating of discrimination and violence against girls, among other things, are all necessary for the empowerment of the girl child,

Noting the recent progress made globally towards ending child, early and forced marriage, including a decrease in the proportion of girls who were married before the age of 18 in the past decade from one in four to approximately one in five, while expressing concern that, despite this global trend, progress has been uneven across regions, that the current pace of change is not sufficient to eliminate child, early and forced marriage by 2030 and that the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic are projected to result in 13 million additional cases of child, early and forced marriage that otherwise would have been averted by 2030,

Recognizing that, in some contexts, the practice of child, early and forced marriage may include arrangements that are not formalized, registered or recognized by a religious or State authority, that such arrangements should be addressed in policies and programmes on child, early and forced marriage and that the gathering of information on these arrangements will help to develop responses for affected girls and women,

Noting with concern that deep-rooted gender inequalities and stereotypes, harmful practices, perceptions and customs, and discriminatory norms are not only obstacles to the full enjoyment of human rights and the empowerment of all women and girls, but are also among the root causes of child, early and forced marriage, and that the persistence of child, early and forced marriage places children, in particular the girl child, at greater risk of being exposed to and encountering various forms of discrimination and violence throughout their lives,

Noting with concern also that poverty, insecurity, early pregnancy and lack of education are also among the root causes of child, early and forced marriage, that armed conflict and humanitarian emergencies are among the exacerbating factors and that child, early and forced marriage remains common in rural areas and among the poorest communities, and recognizing that the immediate alleviation and eventual eradication of extreme poverty must remain a high priority for the international community,

Recognizing that child, early and forced marriage is underrecognized and underreported and often coincides with impunity and lack of accountability, particularly at the community level, and that the persistence of child, early and forced marriage places women and girls at greater risk of being exposed to and encountering various forms of discrimination and violence throughout their lives, including marital rape and sexual, physical and psychological violence, and reinforces the lower status of girls and adolescent girls in society,

Recognizing also that child, early and forced marriage is a major impediment to the achievement of the economic empowerment of women and their social and economic development, thereby hampering the ability of women to enter, advance and remain in the labour market, and that this harmful practice can impede economic independence and impose direct and indirect short- and long-term costs on society, and recognizing further that the economic autonomy of women can expand their options for leaving abusive relationships,

Recognizing further that child, early and forced marriage undermines women's and girls' autonomy and decision-making in all aspects of their lives and that the empowerment of and investment in all women and girls, as well as the strengthening of their voice, agency, leadership and meaningful participation in all decisions that affect them, are key factors in breaking the cycle of gender inequality and discrimination, violence and poverty and are critical, inter alia, for sustainable development, peace, security, democracy and inclusive economic growth, Bearing in mind the vital importance of birth registration for the realization of the human rights of individuals, especially girls,

Recognizing that men and boys should play a role as strategic partners and allies of women and girls and that their meaningful engagement can contribute to transforming discriminatory social norms that perpetuate gender-based violence, as well as child, early and forced marriage, ending this practice and achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls,

Recognizing also that families, communities and religious, traditional and community leaders play an essential role in transforming negative social norms and confronting gender inequality, and recognizing further that empowering girls, including already married girls, requires their active participation in decision-making processes and as agents of change in their own lives and communities, including A/RES/75/167 Child, early and forced marriage 4/11 20-17337 through women's and girls' organizations, with the active support and engagement of their parents, legal guardians, families and care providers, boys and men, as well as the wider community,

Recognizing further the need to support girls and women who were subjected to child, early and forced marriage, as well as their children, and underscoring the importance of removing structural barriers that prevent their access to services that respond to their specific needs, Noting with concern that child, early and forced marriage disproportionately affects girls who have received little or no formal education and is itself a significant obstacle to educational opportunities and the development of employable skills for girls and young women, in particular girls who are forced to drop out of school owing to pregnancy, marriage, childbirth and/or childcare responsibilities, and that educational possibilities and opportunities are directly related to the empowerment of women and girls, their employment and economic opportunities and their active participation in economic, social and cultural development, governance and decision-making,

Noting with concern also that, despite gains in providing access to education, girls are still more likely than boys to remain excluded from primary and secondary education, and recognizing that the attendance of girls at school can be affected by negative perceptions of menstruation and lack of means to maintain safe personal hygiene, such as water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools that meet the needs of girls,

Recognizing that child, early and forced marriage remains a serious threat to multiple aspects of the physical and psychological health of women and girls, including but not limited to their sexual and reproductive health, significantly increasing the risk of early, frequent and unintended pregnancy, maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity, obstetric fistula and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS, as well as increasing vulnerability to all forms of violence,

Recognizing also that the incidence and risk of child, early and forced marriage can increase during humanitarian emergencies, situations of forced displacement, armed conflict, public health emergencies and natural disasters because of various factors, including insecurity, increased risks of sexual and gender-based violence, the misconception of providing protection through marriage, gender inequality, lack of access to continuous, quality education, the stigmatization of pregnancy outside marriage, the absence of family planning services, disruption in social networks and routines, increased poverty and the absence of livelihood opportunities, and that this requires increased attention, appropriate protection measures and coordinated action by relevant stakeholders, with the full and meaningful participation of the women and girls affected, from the early stages of humanitarian emergencies, and recognizing further the importance of addressing the increased vulnerability of women and girls to sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation in those situations,

Recognizing further that preventing and ending child, early and forced marriage and supporting married girls and women affected by this harmful practice require appropriate gender- and age-sensitive protection, prevention and response measures, as well as coordinated action by relevant stakeholders, and that existing gaps in the collection and use of reliable data and evidence remain a major challenge for programming and informing appropriate measures and actions,

Expressing deep concern about the unprecedented and multifaceted negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the incidence of, and efforts to end, child, early and forced marriage, including the wide-reaching economic, social and human consequences and devastating impacts of the pandemic on the livelihoods of people and families, especially women and girls, and the poorest and most vulnerable, as Child, early and forced marriage A/RES/75/167 20-17337 5/11 well as the severe disruption to health and education systems, social protection programmes and the provision of protection and support services, including essential services,

Noting with deep concern that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated containment measures, including school closures and restrictions on the right to freedom of movement, are likely to increase risks faced by girls, including already married girls, as well as women affected by this harmful practice, including risks associated with sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking in persons and other types of exploitation, social isolation, unintended and/or early pregnancy, obstetric fistula, female genital mutilation, economic hardship, as well as the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work and the associated risk of not returning to school, and difficulties in gaining access to health-care services, hindering the fulfilment of their rights and future economic opportunities, and that these risks are even further exacerbated in humanitarian situations,

Expressing deep concern that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic not only exacerbates root causes of child, early and forced marriage, but also diverts international, regional and national attention and resources away from, inter alia, the prevention and elimination of child, early and forced marriage and other harmful practices, and furthermore that COVID-19 containment measures are delaying and disrupting efforts, including by civil society and other relevant stakeholders, to end child, early and forced marriage, especially at the local level,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General;
2. Calls upon States, with the participation of relevant stakeholders, including women and girls, men and boys, parents and other family members, teachers, religious, traditional and community leaders, civil society, organizations led by girls, women's organizations, youth and human rights groups, the media and the private sector, to develop and implement holistic, comprehensive and coordinated

responses and strategies to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage, to support girls and women who are affected or at risk, who have fled such a marriage or whose marriage has dissolved, and widowed girls or women who were married as girls, including through the strengthening of child protection systems, protection mechanisms such as safe shelters, access to justice and the sharing of best practices across borders;

3. Also calls upon States to develop and implement measures at all levels to end child, early and forced marriage, including national and subnational action plans where appropriate, and to make adequate resources available across relevant sectors, including health, nutrition, protection, governance and education;

4. Urges States to enact, enforce and uphold laws and policies aimed at preventing and ending child, early and forced marriage, protecting those at risk and addressing the needs of those affected, and work towards the coherence of these laws and policies at the local level, to ensure that marriage is entered into only with the informed, free and full consent of the intending spouses;

5. Calls upon States to enact, enforce and uphold laws concerning a minimum age of marriage, to monitor their application and to progressively amend laws with lower minimum ages of marriage and/or ages of majority to 18 and engage all relevant authorities to ensure that these laws are well known;

6. Urges States to repeal or amend laws and remove any provisions that enable perpetrators of rape, sexual abuse or abduction to escape prosecution and punishment by marrying their victims;

7. Calls upon States to strengthen their efforts to ensure the timely registration of births and marriages, especially for individuals living in rural and remote areas, including by identifying and removing all physical, administrative, procedural and any other barriers that impede access to registration and by providing, where lacking, mechanisms for the registration of customary and religious marriages;

8. Also calls upon States to promote the meaningful participation of and active consultation with children and adolescents, including already married girls, on all issues affecting them and to raise awareness about their rights, including the negative impact of child, early and forced marriage, through safe spaces, forums and support networks, including in digital spaces, that provide information, life skills and leadership skills training and opportunities, including catch-up and literacy education, and lifelong learning opportunities, remote learning opportunities and childcare, as needed, to be empowered, to express themselves, to participate meaningfully in all decisions that affect them and to become agents of change within their communities;

9. Further calls upon States to promote awareness-raising about the harmful effects of child, early and forced marriage on the individual and wider society and the benefits of ending this harmful practice, including through open dialogue with all stakeholders, including girls and boys, women and men, religious, traditional and community leaders, parents, legal guardians and other family members, to work with local communities to combat negative social norms and gender stereotypes that condone child, early and forced marriage, to empower parents and communities to abandon the practice and to empower all women and girls to make informed decisions about their lives;

10. Recognizes that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment and in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding and that parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child, acknowledging the need to support their capacity to

prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage, and reaffirming that the best interests of the child will be their basic concern;

11. Urges Governments, while addressing child, early and forced marriage, to confront family poverty and social exclusion through investing in family-oriented policies addressing the multidimensional aspects of poverty, focusing on education, health, employment, social security, livelihoods and social cohesion, paying special attention to gender-sensitive social protection measures, child allowances for parents and pension benefits for older persons and protecting, supporting and empowering children, including girls, in child-headed households;

12. Also urges Governments, with the collaboration of relevant stakeholders, to tackle poverty, lack of economic opportunities for women and girls and other entrenched economic incentives that act as drivers of child, early and forced marriage, including by ensuring the rights of women and girls to inheritance and property, their equal access with men and boys to social protection, childcare services and direct financial services, to encourage girls to continue their education, including through their re-enrolment in school after childbirth, to develop livelihood opportunities through access to technical and vocational education and training and life skills education, including financial literacy, and to promote freedom of movement, women's equal access to full and productive employment and decent work, as well as equal political participation and rights to inherit, own and control land and productive measures;

13. Encourages States to promote and protect the human rights of already married girls and women affected by this harmful practice, to promote equality in all aspects of marriage and its dissolution and to address their specific needs, such as through targeted programmes that provide social services to protect them from sexual and gender-based violence, increase their decision-making power, make it easier for them to seek formal employment, increase their economic independence and financial literacy, access education, skills development programmes and lifelong learning opportunities, ensure their equal access to health-care services and information and decrease their social isolation, including by establishing or strengthening childcare services and working with communities to change discriminatory social norms;

14. Calls upon States to promote and protect the right of women and girls to equal access to education through enhanced emphasis on free and quality primary and secondary education, including catch-up and literacy education for those who have not received formal education, have left school early or were forced to leave school, including because of marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and/or childcare responsibilities, which empowers young women and girls to make informed decisions about their lives, employment, economic opportunities and health, including through scientifically accurate and age-appropriate comprehensive education that is relevant to cultural contexts, that provides adolescent girls and boys and young women and men, in and out of school, consistent with their evolving capacities, and with appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians, with the best interests of the child as their basic concern, information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, gender equality and the empowerment of women, human rights, physical, psychological and pubertal development and power in relationships between women and men, to enable them to build self-esteem and foster informed decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills and to develop respectful relationships, in full partnership with young persons, parents, legal guardians, caregivers, educators and health-care providers, in order to contribute to ending child, early and forced marriage;

15. Recognizes that education is one of the most effective ways to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage and to help married women and girls to make informed decisions about their



lives, and urges States to remove barriers to education, including by investing in quality primary and secondary education for every child in a safe environment, through adequate financing, ensuring that married girls and boys, pregnant girls and women and young parents continue to have access to schooling, improving access to quality formal education and skills development, especially for those living in remote or insecure areas, improving the safety of girls at and on the way to and from school, providing safe and adequate sanitation, including for menstrual hygiene management, adopting and implementing laws and policies to prohibit, prevent and address violence and to hold perpetrators accountable, strengthening and intensifying their efforts to implement effective violence prevention and response activities in schools and communities, engaging men and boys, community leaders and parents, educating children from a young age regarding their human rights and the importance of treating all people with dignity and respect and designing educational programmes and teaching materials that support respectful relationships, non-violent behaviours, gender equality and empowerment of women and girls;

16. Encourages States to adopt, as appropriate, and implement inclusive policies and programmes to promote technical and vocational training and skills development and lifelong learning opportunities, including in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in information and communications technology, as well as higher educational opportunities for women and girls, including those at risk of or affected by child, early and forced marriage, so as to enable them to gain the knowledge, attitudes and skills that they need to fulfil their full potential;

17. Urges Governments to promote, respect and protect the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health through the development and enforcement of policies and legal frameworks and the strengthening of health systems, including health information systems, that make universally accessible and available quality, gender-responsive, adolescent-friendly health services, sexual and reproductive health-care services, information and commodities, HIV and AIDS prevention, testing, treatment and care, mental health services and nutrition interventions and prevention, treatment of and care for obstetric fistula and other obstetric complications by providing the continuum of services, including family planning, prenatal and postnatal care, skilled birth attendance, emergency obstetric care and post-partum care;

18. Also urges Governments to promote and protect the human rights of all women and girls, including the right of women, and those girls who have been subjected to child, early and forced marriage, to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, and to adopt and accelerate the implementation of laws, policies and programmes that protect and enable the enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including reproductive rights, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences;

19. Urges States to formulate or review, as needed, appropriate policies, programmes or strategies in order to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage, and address discrimination and violence, including domestic violence, which may occur against women and girls subjected to child, early and forced marriage, as well as strengthen child protection systems and provide targets and timetables for implementation;

20. Also urges States to ensure access to justice and accountability mechanisms and remedies for the effective implementation and enforcement of laws aimed at preventing and eliminating child, early and forced marriage, including by informing women, girls and boys about their rights under

relevant laws, including in marriage and at its dissolution, improving legal infrastructure, removing all barriers to access to legal counselling, assistance and remedies, training law enforcement officers, the judiciary and professionals working with women and children and ensuring oversight of the handling of cases of child, early and forced marriage;

21. Calls upon States to develop and implement, in consultation with and with the participation of women and, as appropriate, girls, and integrate into humanitarian responses, from the early stages of humanitarian emergencies, measures to address the increased vulnerability of women and girls to child, early and forced marriage, and to protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation during humanitarian emergencies, situations of forced displacement, armed conflict, natural disasters and public health emergencies, including by ensuring their access to such services as health and education, as well as strengthening follow-up and interventions to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage in humanitarian settings, as well as to address the needs of those affected;

22. Also calls upon States to take a comprehensive, rights-based, age- and gender-responsive, victim-centred and multisectoral approach that takes into account linkages with other harmful practices in the prevention of and response to child, early and forced marriage in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to pay particular attention to the specific needs of all women and girls, in particular those in vulnerable Child, early and forced marriage situations and those experiencing various forms of violence, discrimination, stigmatization, exclusion and inequalities, including in humanitarian situations, in terms of, inter alia, access to essential services such as safe spaces, shelters and other social protection services, health-care services, safe and affordable drinking water and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, as well as access to education and to timely registration of births and marriages;

23. Further calls upon States, with the collaboration of relevant stakeholders, to ensure that COVID-19 response measures are transformative, participatory and adequately funded, promote inclusive, gender-equal and sustainable economies and societies, and address inequalities and exclusion and poverty, which are among the root causes of child, early and forced marriage by, inter alia:

(a) Paying particular attention to the specific needs of children, especially adolescent girls, who are more likely to be subjected to child, early and forced marriage, in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at all levels, and promoting their effective and meaningful participation in decisions that affect them, by prioritizing the provision of child- and adolescent-centred services, with a focus on equitable access, particularly in relation to schooling, nutrition programmes, immunization, maternal and newborn care, and child protection programmes;

(b) Mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on families and communities by, inter alia, expanding programmes that protect them against economic shocks, including poverty eradication measures, labour policies, public services and gender-responsive social protection programmes;

(c) Mitigating the impact of school closures, particularly for those learners who are among the poorest, most marginalized and vulnerable, especially girls, by facilitating access to and continuity of equitable and inclusive quality education for all, including through distance learning, re-enrolling all previously enrolled children and those who were already out of school, providing community awareness on the importance of girls' education, and working to ensure that those subjected to child, early and forced marriage, pregnant girls and women, as well as young parents, also continue to have access to schooling on an equal basis with others, including by ensuring access to the

Internet and bridging the digital divides, both between and within countries and the gender digital divide;

(d) Adopting measures to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work and the feminization of poverty, which is exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to address the discrimination and gender inequality, including gender stereotypes and negative social norms, attitudes and behaviours, unequal power relations in which women and girls are viewed as subordinate to men and boys, that are at the root of these imbalances;

(e) Ensuring continuity and further strengthening protection and support services for women and girls who experience violence, including sexual and genderbased violence, including domestic violence, during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially girls at risk of child, early and forced marriage and already married girls and women affected by this harmful practice, and designating protection shelters, hotlines and help desks, health and support services and legal protection and support as essential services available to all women and girls, in addition to establishing safeguarding measures and raising awareness and providing training for police, judiciary, first responders, health workers, and education and child services staff;

(f) Ensuring uninterrupted access to and funding for essential health-care services, including sexual and reproductive health-care services, and to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, Child, early and forced marriage including menstrual hygiene, and including in disadvantaged areas such as rural communities, informal settlements and humanitarian settings;

(g) Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 response measures on the ability of civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders working at the local and national levels to continue their work with girls, families and local communities to prevent and respond to child, early and forced marriage;

24. Encourages relevant United Nations entities and agencies, regional and subregional organizations, within their respective mandates, civil society and other relevant actors and human rights mechanisms to continue to collaborate among themselves and with Member States in developing and implementing strategies and policies at the national, regional and international levels to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage, as well as to support those who were married as children;

25. Encourages relevant United Nations entities and agencies, regional and subregional organizations, the international financial institutions, civil society and other relevant actors and human rights mechanisms to continue to collaborate with Member States and national statistical agencies in order to assist in strengthening and building capacity for data and reporting systems for analysing, monitoring and publicly reporting on progress to end child, early and forced marriage based on evidence;

26. Affirms the need for States and relevant United Nations entities and agencies to improve the collection and use of quantitative, qualitative and comparable data on violence against women and harmful practices, including in humanitarian settings and in the context of public health emergencies such as COVID-19, disaggregated by sex, age, disability, civil status, race, ethnicity, migratory status, geographical location, socioeconomic status, education level and other key factors, as appropriate, to enhance research and dissemination of evidence-based and good practices relating to the prevention and elimination of child, early and forced marriage and to strengthen monitoring and

impact assessment of existing policies and programmes as a means of ensuring their effectiveness and implementation;

27. Encourages the international community to fulfil its commitment in supporting developing countries, particularly African countries, least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in strengthening the capacity of national statistical offices and data systems to ensure access to high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data while ensuring national ownership in supporting and tracking progress, including in the context of child, early and forced marriage;

28. Encourages Governments to include information on progress towards eliminating child, early and forced marriage, including best practices and implementation efforts, in their national reports to relevant international treaty bodies and the universal periodic review and within the national voluntary reviews conducted through the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

29. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report to the General Assembly, based on evidence, before the end of its seventy-sixth session, on progress towards ending child, early and forced marriage worldwide, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as best practices for programmes aimed at ending the practice and supporting already married girls and women affected by this practice, including girls' and women's empowerment programmes, gaps in funding, research and data collection, using information provided by Member States, United Nations bodies, agencies, funds and programmes, civil society and other relevant stakeholders; Child, early and forced marriage

30. Decides to consider the issue of child, early and forced marriage at its seventy-seventh session under the item entitled "Promotion and protection of the rights of children", taking into account the multifaceted and worldwide nature of this issue.

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## 6. COMMONWEALTH

### 20 April 2018: CHOGM Communiqué “Towards a Common Future”

4. Heads are encouraged by continuing action by member countries and Commonwealth bodies to prevent and eliminate sexual and gender-based violence; **child, early and forced marriage**; and female genital mutilation as barriers to the development and the full realisation of girls’ and women’s human rights and to sustainable growth and development. Heads also encouraged support for **already married girls, adolescents and women who have been affected by such practices**.

### 18 April 2018: Commonwealth Women’s Forum Outcome Statement “An Empowered Future for Women and Girls”

While many countries have made progress in adopting legislation to end Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and harmful traditional practices including **child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM)** and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), substantive challenges remain in preventing VAWG and in accessing justice and service provision. VAWG is one of the most pervasive human rights violations and has numerous damaging consequences for the welfare of women and girls preventing them from full participation in society. It also affects women and girls’ families, their communities and states and, at two (2) per cent of the global Gross Domestic Product (UN Women, 2016), it has significant economic costs.

29. Urge Heads to take decisive actions to develop, resource and implement holistic national action plans in alignment with the SDGs in order to deliver on the international and Commonwealth commitments to eliminate **CEFM** and FGM/C. These should include work on education, access to community level resources, legislative and policy frameworks and better data to deliver on commitments to end both practices in alignment with the SDGs and the Kigali Declaration.

30. Call for more resources to support the Commonwealth Secretariat to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to consider the complex drivers and data of **CEFM** and FGM/C to inform strategies and actions, including supporting schemes for women of all ages, and to prioritise early programming to respond to and prevent **CEFM** and FGM/C, particularly in emergencies and armed conflicts.