

Draft Resolution: Against Child Marriage

Sponsors: Canada, Bhutan, Norway, Spain

Signatories: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Honduras, Japan, Mexico, Somalia, Sweden, United Kingdom

The General Assembly

Basing this upon the 2013 resolution on child, early, and forced marriages which recognizes child marriage as a human rights violation,

Keeping in mind article 21 of the Child's Right Act that states that no person under the age of 18 is capable of contradicting a valid marriage,

Referring to the articles 12 and 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which state that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his family, everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks, men and women of full age have the right to marry and to found a family, and that marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses,

Recognizing work done so far by Member States to combat child marriage in their respective territories,

Fully aware of the various causes contributing to child marriage, including but not limited to poverty, lack of education and traditional religious practices,

Bearing in mind that child marriage is particularly prevalent in rural communities,

Reminding all 193 Member States of the mutual agreement upon the Sustainable Development Goals, one of which is SDG 5.3, aiming to "eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage",

Recalling the fact that child marriage disproportionately affects girls,

1. *Accepts* the UNICEF definition of child marriage as the marriage of a boy or girl under the age of 18;
2. *Urges* Member States to adopt legislation raising the minimum age of marriage in accordance to each country's norms and to recognize underage marriages as illegitimate and not legally binding, with the following proposal:
 - a. Member States which do not yet have a minimum age of marriage to implement a minimum age of 16,
 - b. all Member States to implement a minimum age of marriage of 18 by 2030, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5.3;
3. *Proposes* to increase enforcement structures for existing minimum marriage age laws;
4. *Strongly endorses* eliminating any legal loopholes which, for example, allow forced child marriage after rape;
5. *Encourages* the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns on a communal level by:
 - a. informing parents in practicing communities of the risks associated with forcing their children into marriages such as death in childbirth, contracting HIV and other sexually

transmitted diseases, as well as being subjected to extreme violence at the hands of their spouses,

- b. holding regular speeches in poor communities about the economic benefits for families that come with keeping their children in school,
 - c. work with community leaders to use their influence to spread awareness,
 - d. continuing the education of security forces and local authorities that already exist in order to make it easier for them to recognize illegal child marriage and to show an appropriate reaction,
 - e. creating a fund for education in poor (by the respective national standards), rural and/or remote communities;
6. *Further calls upon* Member States to implement the goals set forth in clause 4 by working with non-governmental organizations, such as UNICEF, and that governments help other governments, more specifically by:
 - a. Less Developed Countries (LDCs) receiving financial aid from More Developed Countries (MDCs) to implement country-wide campaigns,
 - b. offering financial incentives to NGOs with established infrastructure to add child marriage awareness to their agendas,
 - c. encouraging MDCs to increase and expand the number and scope of campaigns in LDCs;
7. *Supports* measures to empower children, especially girls, and women, since they are the overwhelming majority of victims, by means of:
 - a. skills workshops that seek to improve the skills relevant to local economy and labour market,
 - b. economic opportunities and training,
 - c. encouraging children to complete mandatory education;
8. *Endorses* education not only for girls, but for all children, to create a basis for a future society that is uniformly in support of SDG 5.3;
9. *Recommends* the introduction of guaranteed economic opportunities for girls and their families outside of marriage, by offering, for example:
 - a. Micro loans to women seeking annulment of their marriage, giving them a chance to create an additional income, thereby reducing their financial dependence and providing a positive example for younger generations,
 - b. Further financial, or other, community-specific and relevant incentives (for example livestock);
10. *Further encourages* international cooperation to fight human trafficking and corruption which contribute to higher rates of child marriage;
11. *Affirms* the will of the international community to work with local religious leaders to find ways around child marriage;

12. *Further urges* states to allow the creation of temporary safe havens in cooperation with NGOs for children trying to escape forced marriage in order to:

- a. ensure the safety of affected children,
- b. provide psychological support to children,
- c. provide a neutral place for mediation between victims of child marriage and their spouses,
- d. temporarily continue their education at the safe haven facility until the children's safety is guaranteed and they can be reintroduced into their community,
- e. provide legal counseling to better fight ongoing legal battles related to marriage in a national court,
- f. ultimately re-integrate those affected back into family structures (especially in countries where family values are highly valued culturally), but only if these are considered safe after thorough assessments have been carried out;

13. *Promotes* girls' access to specialised sexual and reproductive health services, including:

- a. educational campaigns on sexual education, hygienic norms, family planning, dangers of early childbirth, rights to decide on sexual partners and sexually transmitted diseases,
- b. the opportunity to talk to medical professionals without the presence of an official guardian (e.g. parent, spouse),
- c. access to contraception, vaccination (especially against sexually transmitted diseases) and medication,
- d. routine medical check-ups,
- e. group discussions with peers on relevant topics;

14. *Further requests* help for into motherhood pressured child brides by:

- a. informing families about the elevated risks during childbirth for girls under 18,
- b. providing medical and psychological support;

15. *Resolves* to remain seized on the issue.