

UNICEF



Topic B: "Ending Child Marriage: Protecting Rights and Promoting Education"

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Welcoming letter

Welcome delegates to the CFMUN.

We as your moderator and chair are very happy to have you as a delegate in the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund Committee (UNICEF).

The committee will focus on finding solutions for problems that affect children's and youth rights and their way of living globally.

We encourage each of you as delegates to present the ideas and perspectives of your nations, and to remember that this should contribute by bringing positive changes on a global scale. It is important that as a committee, all the focus goes into the well being of children and youth everywhere, making sure the solutions lead to meaningful results.

Sincerely,

Lourdes Rosales and Valentina Orendain

Moderator and Chair of UNICEF

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I. Committee Background

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was created on December 11th, 1946 by the United Nations General Assembly.

Created with the purpose of providing emergency support, like food and healthcare to mothers and children that were affected by World War II.

UNICEF's purpose nowadays, besides working on long-term projects such as looking forward to the protection of children's rights and well-being from more than 190 countries, is also to work in emergencies for the most vulnerable children who suffer from natural disasters, wars or poverty. (UNICEF., 2018).

II. Introduction to the Topic

Child marriage is defined as a formal marriage between a child that is under the age of 18 years and an adult or other child. In the context of child marriage, children do not have the liberty to choose if they want to get married. According to UNICEF, approximately 12 million girls are married each year before they are 18 years old. This practice can have significant consequences in children as it limits its educational growth or personal knowledge and increases the risk of domestic violence and poverty.

Child marriage is usually viewed from families as a way of providing security or financial stability for their child. However, families often ignore the possible harm child marriage causes. This practice is very common particularly in African countries like Niger, Chad, Central African Republic, Mali, Mozambique among others.

III. Evolution of the Topic

Child marriage has been present over time in many countries. In the past, child marriage was considered for families a way of protecting the child and being able to conserve the family reputation, this was more common over time until organizations like UNICEF started to care about children's liberty and security. Consequently, this organizations started looking forward for countries to apply strict laws for child marriage not being an option in families. As a result of these laws, the practice has not been as accepted in countries as it used to be.

In 2024, child marriage is in its process of being less ordinary as it used to be worldwide. In contrast, Central Africa countries continue having high rates of child marriage. Situations like COVID-19 pandemic and climate change have worsened the exposure to vulnerabilities, leading more families to choose child marriage as a source of protecting their child and family from possible poverty or loneliness.

IV. Relevant Events

- **1948** - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) established that in marriage both people should have a free and full consent. (THE 17 GOALS, UN Sustainable Development, 2024)
- **1962** - The United Nations made a convention on consent to marriage, where the importance of a legal minimum age for marriage should be established. (HELP CHILDREN NOW, UNICEF USA, 2024)
- **2003** - In the Maputo Protocol from the African Union, it was established as necessary to state 18 as the minimum age for marriage. (United Nations Population Fund, 2024)
- **2018** - The Organization of American States reunited policies in countries against child marriage focusing in rural areas where it was still common. (HELP CHILDREN NOW, UNICEF USA, 2024)
- **2020** - Increase in child marriage due to COVID-19. (Save the Children, 2024)
- **2024** - Urgent need for action in protecting rights and children. (HELP CHILDREN NOW, UNICEF USA, 2024)

V. UN and External Actions

UN Actions

The UN has established agreements to forbid child marriage. Including global programs like the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programs to End Child Marriage and regional interventions where the UN focuses on providing education and health services to carry on with societal norms from families. (UNICEF, 2024). The UN also supports and leads global campaigns to increase awareness. UN's main goal is to strenght educational state, avoid possibility of poverty, particullary in African countries where children marriage is common. To ensure progress, UN monitors data and works with the goverments to develop and create laws accurate for each country that can be able to set legal marriage until at least 18 years old. (UNICEF, 2024)

V. UN and External Actions

External Actions

Countries, NGO's and organizations have put into practice various strategies to deal and try to decrease child marriage. These include legal reforms, campaigns for educational programs, and international collaborations. Several governments have put into action programs to keep girls in school by giving help to families economically. This resulted in many countries by raising the legal minimum age for marriage to 18 years old. NGO's like "Girls not Brides" have come to 1500 organizations to promote awareness and empower communities. (*Girls Not Brides, 2024*) International campaign like "She Decides" amplify efforts to be known the child marriage's impact on children health, education and rights, especially in girls. This has not always been easy, as poverty or conflicts make it difficult to change people minds and raise awareness of the risk of child marriage for the child. (*Save the Children, 2024*)

VI. Conclusion

In conclusion, child marriage is an issue that affects millions of children worldwide, particularly girls in African countries. Despite the progress that has been made with initiatives and organizations, child marriage continues to exist due to poverty, social crisis, traditions and other factors depending on the community.

Ensuring the implementation of these plans is important in order for children to have the correct access to education, health and economic help. All this would not only help reduce the majority of child marriage but also to look forward for the wellbeing of countries and communities. Plans and programs from UN, NGOs, governments, educational programs, campaigns and economic help, have helped with the decrease of child marriage.

In order to decrease and try to eliminate child marriage, it is essential the commitment of organizations and communities and the plan of effective solutions. (UNICEF, 2024)

VII. Committee Focus

1. What specific programs or campaigns can your country implement to ensure that children have access to education in order to prevent child marriage?
2. How can your country work with NGOs like “Girls not Brides” to empower programs for the sustainability of children and their families?
3. What legal reforms can be implemented in order to assure that in all countries the minimum age for marriage is 18?
4. How can communities support children so they do not feel pressure to marry at a young age?
5. What actions can be applied so children from all over the world can grow up in a safe environment where there is freedom to make their own choices about marriage?

VII. Participation List

- Dominican Republic
- French Republic
- Islamic Republic of Iran
- Islamic Republic of Mauritania
- Japan
- Kingdom of Spain
- Lao People's Democratic Republic
- People's Republic of China
- Plurinational State of Bolivia
- Republic of Colombia
- Republic of Ecuador
- Republic of El Salvador
- Republic of Equatorial Guinea
- Republic of India
- Republic of Mozambique
- Russian Federation
- State of Eritrea
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- United Republic of Tanzania
- United States of America

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