**Submission to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) report on Child, Early and Forced marriage**

[UNGA Resolution 69/156](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/156)

**February 2016**

Save the Children is the world’s leading independent organisation for children, working in 120 countries through our members, programmes and partners. Our mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

Save the Children has a dual mandate as a development and humanitarian agency, covering issues such as health and nutrition, education, poverty, child protection and child rights governance. Save the Children considers child marriage a harmful practice that needs to be tackled through a rights-based and full spectrum approach that includes development and humanitarian contexts.

This submission complements Save the Children’s previous submission (attached) to OHCHR in October 2015, which included an overview of existing programmes and strategies to end child marriage implemented by Save the Children in Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Nepal, as well as programmes led by our office in Canada.

**I. Addressing the issue**

Save the Children aims to address child marriage across all of our core program areas, including education, health and child protection. We believe that only by addressing the root causes of child marriage – such as gender inequality, poverty, low levels of education – will we be successful in ending child marriage.

We are, therefore, working to positively transform discriminatory social norms and institutions that perpetuate the harmful practice of child marriage. Save the Children encourages and facilitates child participation at all levels of our work to ensure both girls and boys are engaged in dialogue and advocacy to end child marriage and promote gender equality.

# Save the Children Canada

1. **Background**

Save the Children is currently implementing two projects on ending child marriage in Somaliland and Nigeria, both of which are funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC). Save the Children Canada provides oversight to both projects and also provides technical support for the full integration of gender equality into the projects. The below text provides an overview of some good practices of these projects with regards to gender equality, child and youth participation as well as education.

1. **Somaliland (Somalia)**

**Overview**

Somalia is one of the most challenging contexts worldwide for women and girls. Girls and women are subject to systematic discrimination and exclusion in all spheres of social life, both a cause and consequence of the fact that they may be traded in marriage as economic assets. Somali girls are customarily married at a very young age (12 -15 years, or younger) and many are sold into marriage to provide dowry money for their families. There are indications that the rate of early marriage has been increasing in recent years, and is particularly high in Internally Displaced People camps. Early marriage commonly denies girls their childhood and condemns them to a life of ill-health and poverty. Those who marry early are more likely to experience domestic violence, forced sexual relations, reduced levels of sexual and reproductive health, and lower levels of education. Many of these consequences are exacerbated by weak systems and government inability to protect and fulfil the rights of its citizens, and most so the equal right of the girl child. Health, education and protection systems have poor infrastructure, limited human resources and lack capacity to provide appropriate support to child brides.

**Legal reforms and policies**

Formal statutory law, Islamic Shari’a law and customary law (xeer) coexist in Somaliland. The demarcation in the applications of these three different sources of law is not always clear and has never been systematically addressed. Somaliland formal law indicates a legal gap on the definition of childhood or adulthood and the age of marriage is not defined. There are also no laws for the registration of births, marriages and deaths. The National Gender Policy (2009) has no reference or recognition of child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) and the Juvenile Justice Law (2007) is poorly implemented.

**Examples of good practices and programmes ending the practice and supporting already married women and girls**

In Somaliland, both girls and boys are affected by CEFM, with girls facing additional challenges, consequences and risks. Poverty, communities’ beliefs and religious norms together force girls to marry early[[1]](#footnote-1). The Somali community is comprised of a variety of clans, social groups, and familial bonds, each of which carries with it its own practice when it comes to the concept of marriage. Even though the age of marriage according to some Islamic schools of thought is said to be 15 years, in some rural areas when a girl reaches the age of nine she is considered suitable for marriage. As such, if by the age of 15 years the girl has not yet been wed, she may be considered flawed, and viewed as an outcast or as bad luck to her family. Pressure also stems from conservative cultural attitudes regarding sex and family structure; an unmarried woman is assumed to be promiscuous or at risk for rape, and is seen as not playing her appropriate social role as a wife and mother.

Furthermore, girls who live in contexts facing humanitarian crises are more vulnerable to CEFM, as existing social networks and protection mechanisms are disrupted, leaving them more exposed to abuse. In extreme cases, during violent conflict for example, informal community welfare networks can break down entirely, and support for the protection of girls and boys may be non-existent.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Save the Children’s project has been built to address the different and specific needs of girls and boys in relation to CEFM. For example, some of the specific needs of girls, especially those who have married early or are at-risk of being married, are related to **accessing reproductive health services that are adapted to early pregnancies**. Such support is currently being provided to girls by Save the Children and its partners, mostly through referral mechanisms. Another specific need of at-risk girls and girls who have married early concerns the **availability of educational and vocational skills training opportunities**, which can often prevent girls from being married, or can help married girls to have a better quality of life. Such educational and vocational skills training support is currently being provided to girls under the project. Moreover, the project places great emphasis on supporting the creation of an enabling environment for girls and boys to be able to fulfil their rights, notably through community mobilization and sensitization activities being carried out to promote gender equality, prevent child, early and forced marriage, and protect and empower girls and boys who have married early. Finally, the project supports the equitable **participation** of those who affect or are affected by CEFM, including youth and children. As such, **girls’ and boys’ groups** have been established to support their empowerment so they can fulfil their equal rights and protect themselves from abuse, exploitation and various forms of violence, including child marriage. In addition, **Women Lobby Groups** were established to support women to play an essential role in building a protective environment for all children, as well as to ensure women have opportunities to equitably participate in and benefit from all project activities, including taking on leadership roles at the community level.

1. **Nigeria**

**Overview**

The practice of child marriage continues to be prominent in Nigeria. Evidence suggests that 35 per cent of girls in the country were married by age 15, and 40 per cent were married by the age of 18[[3]](#footnote-3). These figures rise substantively in the North-western regions of the country, with 48 per cent of girls married by age 15, and 78 per cent married by age 18. In Northern Nigeria, child marriage mostly affects girls. Consequently, Save the Children’s CEFM project in the region principally targets girls. **Gender equality** is also at the centre of the project, since gender-based discrimination and stereotyping are some of the root causes that are driving the practice in the areas where the project is being implemented. As such, the project works with key stakeholders (including men, boys and religious leaders) to redress existing gender gaps and address pervasive gender inequalities that have an impact on child marriage and on girls.

**Legal reforms and policies**

The Child Rights Act, passed in 2003, raised the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for girls and boys. However, federal law may be implemented differently at the state level and, to date, only 24 states out of the country’s 36 states have adopted the law, where the remaining 12 states yet to adopt this law are the states with the highest rate of child marriage. Notably, Nigeria has three different legal systems (civil, customary and Islamic), operating side by side, which have the power to regulate marriage; states and federal governments have control only over marriages that take place within the civil system.

**Examples of good practices and programmes ending the practice and supporting already married women and girls**

1. Enabling the **empowerment of women and girls**, notably by providing educational, business, life skills and vocational skills training opportunities to girls so they increase their assets, leadership, self-confidence and feel more independent and best able protect themselves, and their children, from child marriage and violence. Such empowerment components are included in the following activities: provision of vocational training for girls, child friendly spaces for girls, numeracy and literacy activities for girls, monthly group sessions on CEFM with girls and women, and capacity building of female members of the Children’s Parliament.
2. **Engaging men** **as active partners of change**, including religious and community leaders. This is being done through multiple and diverse awareness raising and behaviour change activities at the community level that include components to encourage men and boys to become agents of change and support gender equality for all, including in relation to CEFM and education. Religious leaders are sensitized and engaged, notably by playing a key role in the development of communications materials and advocacy strategy to raise awareness of child marriage matters with religious leaders.
3. **Positively transforming discriminatory gender norms** by focusing on transforming gender norms in relation to the low value of girls’ education, notably through the engagement of child marriage and Education Champions and the implementation of awareness campaigns on girls’ education at the community level. These activities showcase the value of education for both boys and girls and put forward **female role models** who explain and show what education has brought them as women and girls, but also to the community as a whole. Moreover, pervasive gender discriminatory norms that make girls more vulnerable to child marriage are tackled through various learning and awareness raising activities which promote gender equality at all levels, notably with: a) children and adults, through **child friendly spaces**, monthly group sessions and town hall meetings on CEFM; b) the community as a whole, through advocacy campaigns on ending child marriage; c) religious leaders, through awareness raising and advocacy activities; and d) government officials, through multiple capacity building and awareness raising activities targeted at them and focusing on child marriage.

**Contacts**

**Mr. Mohamoud M. Aqli**

Child Protection/Child Rights Governance Manager

Save the Children International (Somalia/Somaliland)

Tel: +252 2 570163/570159/570158

Email: aqli.mohamoud@savethechildren.org

**Ms. Anne Kpason**

Head of Child Protection & Child Rights Governance

Save the Children International (Nigeria)

Mobile: +234-8145344998

Email: anne.kpason@savethechildren.org

**Ms. Dominique LaRochelle**

Gender Advisor

Save the Children Canada

Tel: +1 .416.221.5501 (ext. 306)

Email: dlarochelle@savethechildren.ca

# Save the Children South Soudan

**Overview**

In December 2013, violence erupted in South Soudan’s capital Juba and quickly spread to the Greater Upper Nile region. It is estimated that 1.9 million people were displaced within South Sudan and into neighbouring countries in the region[[4]](#footnote-4). Since the eruption of the conflict, fundamental human rights such as access to basic reproductive health care services, quality education, shelter and protection became even harder to access[[5]](#footnote-5). Conflict has also increased the vulnerability of children, grave violations against women and children were perpetrated by people taking advantage of the breakdown of law enforcement mechanisms and community ties[[6]](#footnote-6). In August 2015, a peace agreement between Salva Kiir’s government and the opposition headed by former Vice President Riek Machar was signed and paved the way for a transitional government.

In South Soudan, it is estimated that 52% of girls are married before the age of 18, and 9% before the age of 15, of whom approximately 30% will bear children before the age of 18[[7]](#footnote-7). Girls in South Sudan suffer from discriminatory and financial barriers that deprive them the basic rights to survive, learn and be protected.

Barriers that result in the exclusion of girls include cultural practices that undermine their rights, wellbeing and access to opportunities. Child marriage is common even among the wealthiest households in which girls are nearly likely to be married by age 18 as girls from the poorest households. In addition, only 35.4% of girls are enrolled at the primary school level in South Sudan, and a shocking 1.9% at secondary level. It is estimated that 27% of all girls drop out of primary school every year. Of the 2,424 children reported to have dropped out of school in 2014, 79% were girls of which 12% girls dropped out because of pregnancy and child marriage[[8]](#footnote-8). Sometimes the push for early marriage comes from girls themselves due to the nature of upbringing, culture and peer influence seeing other young girls already married.

**Legal reforms and policies**

The South Sudan Child Act 2008 prohibits subjecting children to negative and harmful practices that affect their health, welfare and dignity. The Child Act also protects every female child from sexual abuse and exploitation and gender-based violence, including rape, incest, early and forced marriage, female circumcision and female genital mutilation. However, implementation of this law remains problematic. Save the Children is advocating for setting up the minimum age for marriage and for enforcing legislation.

**Examples of good practices and programmes ending the practice and supporting already married women and girls**

There are a number of initiatives promoting girls empowerment being implemented in South Sudan. “Too Young to Wed” by UNFPA, “Back to Learning” by UNICEF, Girls Education South Sudan (GESS) funded by UK aid and implemented by partners under the leadership of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology and “Community Girls School” by the Ministry of Education.

On 16th June 2015, Save the Children South Soudan celebrated the Day of the African Child and organized a public event supported by the Ministry of Gender Child and Social Welfare, which brought together more than 1,000 children who demanded to end child marriage. Children from across South Sudan marched on the streets on the Day of the African Child calling on their parents and leaders to “end child marriage and promote education”. Their call was in pursuance of the 2015 theme “Accelerating Our Collective Efforts to End Child Marriage in South Sudan.”

In Juba, children walked from Buluk Primary School to Nyakuron Cultural Centre where they delivered speeches to their policy makers. Organized by the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare with support from Save the Children and other partners, the event attracted Government ministers, Members of Parliament, Directors, and representatives of UN agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations. Child marriage is a serious and long-standing problem in South Sudan, yet many communities accept it as normal practice. Girls as young as 15 years can be married to much older men (some older than their fathers) as long as the man has sufficient wealth to pay dowry or bride price to the girl’s parents.

Save the Children is working to leverage existing opportunities and programmes providing girls platforms and spaces to participate. In 2016, Save the Children will work with children through child rights clubs, child parliament and civil society organisations that work closely with children in their communities. Save the Children will work with child Ambassadors, women representatives and public figures that are championing the need for equal access for girls in South Sudan. Key targets will also include traditional and faith leaders as well as parliamentary committees. Save the Children will launch a three year campaigned entitled “Girls are Children” to galvanize support from stakeholders to remove barriers that deny girls from accessing their rights to learn, survive and be protected.

**Barriers**

Matters of patriarchy, gender based violence and child marriage are deeply engrained in the South Sudanese culture and way of life. Therefore, advocating for girls education and an end to child marriage is likely to be opposed by custodians of culture such as traditional and religious leaders, especially in rural areas. It is important to note, however, that cultural beliefs are not just confined to rural areas. There are also many people, including members of “the elite”, in urban areas that view child marriage and gender based violence as acceptable. At the same time, the economics of marriage, epitomized by huge dowry charges and payments, makes it difficult for some parents to stray from the practise and/or to delay marriage.

Save the Children’s report *Hear it from the Children ‘We want to learn - even during war’ South Sudan*[[9]](#footnote-9) (2015) shows that conflict is another barrier as it increases children’s vulnerability. In situations of armed conflict, children are at increased risk of being exposed to violence, harmful practices, negative coping strategies like recruitment into armed groups, early marriage, child labour, and commercial sexual exploitation – all this is true for South Sudan. As families become separated by violence, and as livelihoods are interrupted, girls become more vulnerable to exploitative practices as way to survive. As some girls resort to, or are forced into commercial sexual exploitation to survive, others are at heightened risk of early marriage due to the attraction of dowry payments that are customary in many communities in South Sudan.

**Contacts**

**Mr. Joseph Akech**

Policy & Advocacy Director, Save the Children, South Sudan

Email: Joseph.akech@savethechildren.org

# Save the Children Tanzania

**Overview of progress made**

Tanzania has one of the highest child marriage prevalence rates in the world. Almost two out of five girls in Tanzania are married before their 18th birthday. Due to inaccurate birth and marriage records, it is difficult to record exact figures of child marriage in Tanzania. Yet child marriage is particularly prevalent in rural areas where children get married as early as 11 years old. World Bank data show that 22.8 per cent of girls aged 15 to 19 in Tanzania had children or were pregnant in 2010, while the adolescent fertility rate (the number of births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19) was 129, giving Tanzania the highest adolescent fertility rate in the world. About 37% of the women aged 20-24 were married/in union before age 18. Although child marriage rates in Tanzania have decreased by 4% since 2004, they remain unacceptably high (Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey, 2012).

**Legal reforms and policies**

Despite this alarming situation, the problem of child marriage has not yet attracted sufficient political action. The necessary policies, systems, and operational structures required to address child marriage are largely lacking and accorded low-priority on the national development agenda. It is hardly featured in the Tanzania Development Vision 2025, even though the issue of reduction in infant and maternal mortality rates by three quarters of current levels is perceived as one of the key goals for ensuring high quality livelihoods. Overall, there is limited investment in strengthening the technical and operational capacity of key national institutions that should be tackling the issue of child marriage. This includes the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Vocational Training.

The low prioritisation of efforts to prevent and eliminate child marriage is also evident at the level of the Local Government Authorities. They lack human resources and interventions needed to promote the recommended practices necessary to achieve desirable outcomes in eliminating child marriage. Reasons behind the lack of attention to child marriage include the absence of a multi stakeholder constituency that encompasses wide range of sectors working on several aspects linked to child marriage.

The Tanzanian Government planned to review the Marriage Act, based on recommendations by the Tanzanian Law Reform Commission and will finalise a government paper for public consultation after the constitutional review process. Save the Children is advocating for a comprehensive reform of marriage laws and policies, including setting the minimum age at 18. Among the proposed changes, it should enact a domestic violence law to make sexual violence in marriage a criminal offense and develop a national action plan to prevent and address the consequences of child marriage. The government should also put an end to pregnancy testing in schools, allow both pregnant and married students to remain in school, and take all possible steps to ensure all girls remain in school to complete their education.

**Examples of good practices and programmes ending the practice and supporting already married women and girls**

In Tanzania, gender activists have reiterated the need for the government to hear the public call to review the Marriage Act of 1971 which allows girls as young as 14-year-old to marry with parental consent. According to them, the law contradicts the effective implementation of the Child Act of 2009, which is a basic national child protection tool. On the 28th of November 2015, the Women’s Legal Aid Centre (WLAC) organised an [event](http://mobile.thecitizen.co.tz/news/Review-marriage-legislation-now--activists-tell-authorities/-/2304482/2976692/-/format/xhtml/-/x3hoa9z/-/index.html) in Dar es Salaam involving the participation of secondary school students to mark 16 days of activism against gender-based violence pushing for the review of the law which has been a big challenge in the war against GBV.

BABA BORA

Save the Children jointly with the local communities developed the BABA BORA (Good Father Campaign) which focuses on **stronger male engagement** in fighting violence and gender equality as to prevent Violence against Children (VAC) in the first place. It is a proactive and positive approach to engaging and involving men and boys in changing behaviour towards children, especially girls, in the home, school and community. Violence against children is the main focus but BABA BORA is also about gender equality. Save the Children will continue working on developing men-inclusive practices and promoting fathers’ roles to ensure rights for children are respected. In parallel, Save the Children aims at building public awareness among policy makers which will be driven by children and more importantly by men – fathers, brothers and key influencers in the community – as they will drive the change in behaviour.

GLOBAL CITIZEN’S DIALOGUE

In 2015, Save the Children supported the participation of a Youth Ambassador from Tanzania, at the Global Citizens’ Dialogue in Geneva. A key objective of the [Citizens’ Hearing](http://www.citizens-post.org/global-citizens-hearing-report/)s movement is to strengthen the feedback loop between global processes and local and national decision-making processes. The Youth Ambassador was part of the Children’s Council in Handeni, Tanzania, where he lives, and was elected by the other children part of the Children’s Council to represent their voice. After having participated to Citizen’s Hearing in Tanzania at district and national levels, the latter being aired live on TV, he participated to the Global Citizens’ Dialogue at the World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva.

In the Global Citizens’ Dialogue the Youth Ambassador from Tanzania advocated for reduction of maternal and child mortality through better provision of maternal, newborn and child health services and elimination of child marriage that increases the risk of health issues and prevents his peers, primarily young girls from accessing their full education. The Citizens’ Hearings have provided a critical input in identifying priorities and in urging governments to respond to it. Involving children and youth was crucial to bring their voices to the attention of key stakeholders including communities, civil society, journalists and government representatives and to inform policies and implementation priorities at local, national and international levels.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Based on the previous work with various stakeholders and within the new global campaign, in the next three years Save the Children is planning to undertake various activities ranging from popular mobilisation activities aiming to put the communities in the forefront and making sure they take stand on child marriage issues; to specific activities aimed at policy makers/parliamentarians, which will include Parliament sessions, panel discussions and debate clubs. In addition, Save the Children will be working with child marriage champions, with both political (e.g., parliamentarians) and technical backgrounds (e.g., University professors, lawyers, education and health experts) as they are needed at all levels to create effective political demand for new legislation to change policy.

Save the Children’s cooperation with parliamentarians will vary from participation in child marriage advocacy events, where they will hear recommendations from representatives of Children’s Councils on importance of changing the legislation and eliminate child marriage in the country, to sessions organised in the Parliament on key child marriage related issues. Save the Children is willing to ensure that they are informed and included in each and every step of the strategy towards ending child marriage. Building consensus among stakeholders around this issue in Tanzania is a key step to successful resource mobilisation and implementation of strategies and programmes. It will also raise awareness around child marriage, the importance of girls’ education and the need to prevent school drop-out due to pregnancy.

**Contacts**

**Ms Theodosia Mhilu**

Director of Women's Legal Aid Centre (WLAC), Tanzania

**Ms Jasminka Milovanovic**

Senior Advocacy and Campaign Manager, Save the Children**,** Tanzania

Email: jasminka.milovanovic@savethechildren.org

# Child marriage among Syrian girls in Jordan

**Background**

Inputs on child marriage among Syrian girls in Jordan are based on the report *Too young to Wed, The Growing Problem of Child Marriage among Syrian Girls in Jordan* published by Save the Children in 2014.

**Overview**

In 2011, before the crisis in Syria, it was estimated that 13% of girls under 18 were married in Syria. Save the Children’s report shows that these figures dramatically increased among Syrian refugees in Jordan where the proportion of registered marriage under 18 rose to 18% in 2012, and as high as 25% in 2013.

**Legal instrument**

The Jordanian legal system sets the minimum age of marriage at 18. However, Shari’a judges may authorise marriage for children aged 15-17 years under certain conditions[[11]](#footnote-11). Although these conditions are restrictive, the significant proportion of child marriages indicates that they are commonly approved. In addition, many Syrian marriages, including child marriage, are not registered.

**Why are more girls being forced to marry?**

According to Save the Children’s report the main reported reasons for child marriage among Syrian in Jordan are to protect their girls from general insecurity and sexual harassment in camps and to escape poverty and lack of economic opportunities. Among those leaving in camps, especially when there is only one man in the household, Syrian refugees reported feeling that it is not sufficient protection for women and girls. As the report states, “parents see child marriage as a way to protect their daughters and their family honour from possible sexual assault and other kind of hardship”. Another reported practice among Syrian refugee girls is to marry to a Jordanian man in order for them and their families to move out of the camp.

The report identifies the consequences for girls and women including the limited educational opportunities and the persistence of gender inequality; the increased risk of violence, abuse and exportation; the increased risk of stillbirth and newborn deaths; and the mental health impact.

**Examples of good practices and programmes ending the practice and supporting already married women and girls**

Experience in Jordan and extensive research on successful practices to eliminate child marriage suggest the following strategies applicable in the Syrian refugee context:

1. Empower girls with information, skills and support networks
2. Provide economic support and incentives to girls and their families
3. Educate and rally parents and community members
4. Enhance girls’ access to a high quality education
5. Encourage supportive laws and policies

As part of Save the Children Regional Response to the Syria crisis, Save the Children is helping children in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt to cope with the worst effects of the war. In Jordan, Save the Children run community awareness sessions on child marriage with children, adolescents and parents with a focus on prevention of child marriage.

Across the region Save the Children’s child protection teams respond to issues related to child marriage, referring cases of gender-based violence to specialised agencies so that victims get specialist support. In Jordan, Save the Children has joined forces with other agencies to launch [*Amani*](file:///C%3A/Users/Associate/Downloads/CPandGBVmessagesEnglishPDF.pdf), a campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of marriage and to spread the message ‘Our sense of safety is everyone’s responsibility’.

[*No Lost Generation*](http://nolostgeneration.org/) was launched as an initiative between UNICEF, UNHCR, Save the Children, World Vision, Mercy Corps and other partners in October 2013. It calls for $1 billion to give Syria’s children safety, stability, and a chance to resume their education and rebuild their lives. The initiative aims to help Syria’s children, both within Syria and in neighbouring countries, to gain access to good-quality education, find protection from exploitation, abuse and violence and access psychological care.

**Contacts**

**Paola Franchi**

Child Protection Technical Advisor (Save the Children International, Iraq)

Email: paola.franchi@svaethechildren.org

Tel: +964 (0) 7511 240 106

# Developments at Global Level

In addition to the country specific information and recommendations provided above, Save the Children takes this opportunity to welcome the 2015 Human Rights Council resolution ([A/HRC/RES/29/8](http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/163/06/PDF/G1516306.pdf?OpenElement)) on Strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage, given its comprehensive nature including focus on humanitarian contexts (art. 13), role of boys/men in changing social norms around gender equality (art. 9) and sexual and reproductive health and rights (art. 12). As a next step, the Council should develop specific and more detailed guidance on how Member States can operationalize the resolution’s provisions at national and subnational level. Save the Children is ready to support OHCHR in the organization of the expert meeting requested by the Human Rights Council resolution (art. 23) as a means to produce such detailed guidance. In this regard, we believe it will be important to interpret the notion of “expert” in a broad sense, which should include children, young people and people from the communities where the practice is prevalent.

END

1. *Knowledge, Attitudes and Practises on Early and Forced Marriage in Somaliland*, Save the Children, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Untying The Knot – Exploring Early Marriage in Fragile States’*, World Vision, March 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Early Marriage a Harmful Traditional Practice- A statistical Exploration*, UNICEF, 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Hear if from the children South Soudan: “We want to learn – even during war”*, Save the Children, 2015 and *“The Girl Has No Rights”: Gender-Based Violence in South Sudan,* Care International, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Hear if from the children South Soudan: “We want to learn – even during war”*, Save the Children, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. South Sudan Country Strategic Plan 2016-2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. EMIS National Booklet 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/sites/default/files/documents/hiftc\_report\_-\_print\_ready\_version\_-\_final.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Citizen’s Hearing Global report*, 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. These conditions include that the groom is “appropriate in terms of religion and wealth”, including that they can pay the alimony and dowry; that all involved consent to the marriage, including the child and their guardian; that the marriage is in the child’s interest and provides economic, safety or social benefits; that the age difference is “appropriate” and that the marriage will not be a reason for discontinuing the child’s education (Inter-Agency Standard Operating Procedures for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection, Jordan 2014). Jordanian Personal Status Law #36, 2010, Article 35/c does outline exceptional cases in which marriage under 15 is allowed, but in general shari’a judges do not authorise marriage of children under 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)