15 December 2013

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Women Human Rights and Gender Section
Palais Des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Re: Information on Child Marriage in Bangladesh for Consideration by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for its Report to the Human Rights Council at its 26th Session

Dear Distinguished Members of the Women Human Rights and Gender Section:

We respectfully submit this letter and the attached documents in response to your invitation to civil society groups to present information on preventing and eliminating child, early and forced marriage.

The Avon Global Center for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School is committed to improving access to justice in an effort to eliminate violence against women and girls. In furtherance of this mission, we have conducted research on child marriage for Justice Imman Ali of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh to support his efforts to understand and address the problem in his country. Bangladesh has the third-highest rate of child marriage in the world with 68.7% of girls married before the age of 18. Its population is also among the world’s most impoverished, and the two problems are closely related. Young brides are exposed to physical and sexual abuse, endure high-risk pregnancies, and are denied access to school or job training. Isolated and disenfranchised, they commonly lack the resources to educate their own children, perpetuating a cycle of poverty.

The following article and legal memoranda, which are enclosed in this submission, examine the effects of Bangladesh’s national laws and policies on the issue:

- Child Marriage in Bangladesh: Causes, Consequences and Legal Framework
- Child Marriage in Bangladesh: Occurrences and Links to Sexual Harassment
- Child Marriage in Bangladesh: Birth and Marriage Registration
- Child Marriage in Bangladesh: Impact of Discriminatory Personal Laws

We hope this information will be useful for your report to the Human Rights Council at its 26th Session. Thank you for your kind attention, and please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide further information.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Brundige
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Visiting Assistant Clinical Professor of Law
Cornell Law School