The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and with reference to the latter’s note ref: WRGS/COW/Res71/175 dated 22nd September 2017, regarding the preparation of the Secretary-General report on child, early and forced marriage, pursuant to the resolution 71/175 of the United Nations General Assembly, has the honor to attach the reply and the information provided by the Syrian Government concerning the above mentioned Resolution and the Secretary General related report.

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

**Attachments**: information

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Palais des Nations  
1211 Genève
Attachment of Note Verbale N°243/17 dated 31 October 2017

Reply and information by the Syrian Government

- Legislative decree N° 26/2007 amended by laws N° 20/2011, N° 24/2015, N° 4/2017 and executive instructions permitted registration marriage or birth at the place of the incident or the place of registry, within maximum 48 hour of addressing the civil registry office, also it was permitted to obtain the documentation of the marriage/birth from the area where it happened or the area of the person’s residence. It is applied and implemented in all the civil registries and their branches across the country.

- A central division was opened in Damascus to serve Syrians from the governorates who couldn't register their marriages/births at their civil registry of their own home town. The division is still functioning since the day of its opening, and did not stop even after work resumption in the civil registries in the related governorates.

- Related articles of legislative decree N° 26/2007 permitted the registration of all marriages/births where it took place no matter the delay regarding their execution, except for the births above 18 years old since it should be viewed by the committees of the non-registered (maktoum) at the area of the family registry.

- Regarding customary marriage contracts, it shall only be adopted after it gets the execution format by the competent court in Syria.

- The right to education and ensuring all the requirement related to it is a priority for the State. the compulsory education Act N°7 for 2012 commit parents to send their children to schools under the penalty of legal accountability. Compulsory education was extended in the year 2002 to be until the 9th grade. It is the right of Syrian children males and females to get education and enter schools at the age of 6 years old.

- The education infrastructure in Syria has suffered severe damage from being...
targeted by the terrorists armed groups. Educational buildings, apparatus and equipment have all been subjected to damage: 28 per cent of the entire stock of educational buildings has been damaged, and numerous educational staff have moved to relatively safer governorates or districts.

- Government expenditure on the education sector in 2015 was 8.4 per cent of total expenditure on all sectors. Some 4.5 million students and pupils were in education in the 2015/16 academic year.

- With regard to preventing children from dropping out of school, Law No. 7 of 2012 was enacted, which obliges all parents or guardians of Syrian children between the ages of 6 and 15 to send them to school at the basic education level, and prescribes legal penalties for those allowing such children to drop out of school.

- The Ministry of Education provided services, to support and encourage children return to schools, to prevent pupils dropping out. A project with UNICEF for girls education was prepared as well school classes targeting children between 8-15 years old, intensive curricular targeting drop out girls and girls who are have not attended school. Decree n°39/2008 commits granting compensations to teachers working in remote areas and semi remote areas in order to guarantee that education is reaching all children in those areas.

- Regarding the issue of forced marriages and child marriages: these phenomena are becoming very prevalent in the areas controlled by the terrorist groups: young girls are forced to get married owing to the deteriorating material circumstances of their families on the one hand, and for fear of being attacked on the other. This phenomenon is also spreading in Syrian refugee camps in neighboring countries, where young girls are trafficked using “camouflaged marriage” as a pretext, although most marriage contracts are not registered all these things are reproduced and described in UN reports. The tragedy of young Syrian girls who are trafficked has been highlighted for the whole world to see, for instance a UNICEF report indicated that the rate of forced marriages among young Syrian women in refugee camps in neighboring countries had doubled with respect to what it was at the beginning of the crisis; reaching 32 per cent in the first quarter of 2014.

- The draft national law on the Rights of the Child, which is about to be issued specifies the eligibility of marriage by the age of maturity of 18 years of age for male and female. It should be noted that the average age of marriage in Syria according to the last family health survey is 29.3 for males and 25.6 for females,
and the percentage of married females under the age of 15 years of age are 4.8 % which shows the low percentage of early marriages.

- The Ministry of Education is active with regards to disseminating health education inside and outside schools to raise awareness of the risks accompanying some negative attitudes related to social and cultural ideas or behaviors, particularly those related to early marriage and marriage among relatives and the behavioral differences among males and females, to contribute to the realization of correct concepts related to these attitudes and behavior.

- Also and in order to enhance the knowledge and attitudes of teenagers towards the issue of reproductive health in particular related to pregnancy and family planning and STDs the Ministry of Education have introduced these topics systematically especially for secondary level students, and through the training plan for the relevant staff working at the Ministry directorate and in the health directorates in schools on how to educate these sensitive topics.

- Regarding unaccompanied children separated from their families, support by the Syrian association for social development is provided to those children and their host families as much as possible, aid was provided to 449 cases of separated children as well as cash assistance was provided to the hosting families to aid them in this regards, also some cases of family reunification was achieved and official identity documentation was provided to some children.

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