



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • BUREAU DU HAUT COMMISSAIRE AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME  
PALAIS DES NATIONS • 1211 Genève 10, SUISSE

Site [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org) • Tél. +41 22 917 9000 • FAX: +41 22 917 9008 • E-MAIL: [registry@ohchr.org](mailto:registry@ohchr.org)

Reference: WHRGS/OWC/RES/41/8

**Subject: Oral update by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on progress, gaps and challenges in addressing child, early and forced marriage, and measures to ensure accountability at the community and national levels pursuant to resolution 41/8 of the Human Rights Council**

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights presents its compliments to all Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations at Geneva and has the honour to refer to Human Rights Council resolution 41/8 entitled “Consequences of child, early and forced marriage”.

In its resolution A/HRC/RES/41/8 adopted on 11 July 2019, the Human Rights Council expressed concern that child, early and forced marriage is under recognized and underreported and often coincides with impunity and a lack of accountability and access to justice, particularly at the community level. It further recognized that criminalization of child, early and forced marriage without complementary measures and support programmes may instead contribute to marginalization and the increase of informal unions or unregistered marriages.

The Human Rights Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide an oral update “on progress, gaps and challenges in addressing child, early and forced marriage, and measures to ensure accountability at the community and national levels, including for women and girls at risk of and those subjected to this harmful practice” at its 44<sup>th</sup> session, in June 2020.

Accordingly, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will be grateful to receive any relevant information for the preparation of this oral update. Information would be welcome on any of the following points:

1. What progress has been made in addressing the drivers of child, early and forced marriage, such as poverty and lack of opportunities for women and girls at risk and survivors, which promote the human rights of women and girls (inheritance, property, social protection, education, and access to employment, land and other productive resources)?
2. What progress has been made to remove legislative provisions that justify or lead to child, early or forced marriage, including provisions that enable perpetrators of rape and other forms of sexual violence to escape prosecution and punishment by marrying their victims? What are the remaining challenges?
3. How are criminal law initiatives (to adopt, amend and implement) to address child, early and forced marriage combined with other supplementary or regulatory measures

HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • BUREAU DU HAUT COMMISSAIRE AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME  
PALAIS DES NATIONS • 1211 Genève 10, SUISSE

Site [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org) • Tél. +41 22 917 9000 • FAX: +41 22 917 9008 • E-MAIL: [registry@ohchr.org](mailto:registry@ohchr.org)

(e.g. protocols, code of conducts), and complemented by protection measures and services for victims and survivors?

4. What are the measures taken to ensure that women and girls at risk or subjected to child, early and forced marriage do not face discriminatory legal, practical and structural barriers to access to justice and legal services, barriers to access to legal aid, including legal advice, assistance and representation, and other legal remedies?
5. What progress has been made in engaging other stakeholders, such as parents and other family members, teachers, religious, traditional and community leaders, civil society, organizations led by girls, women's organizations, youth, men, human rights defenders, parliaments, children's ombudspersons, media, the private sector, national statistics bureaus and gender machineries in the prevention and elimination of child, early and forced marriage?
6. What progress has been made in enhancing protection for girls and women who have been subjected to child, early and forced marriage, through for instance safe shelters, counselling and other support services, including medical, psychological and legal services, as well as programmes focusing on education, health including sexual and reproductive health, livelihood, autonomy, and decision-making to empower girls and women? What are the remaining gaps and challenges?
7. Please provide information on efforts by judicial and non-judicial accountability mechanisms to address child, early and forced marriage at national and regional levels (e.g. national human rights institutions, monitoring or oversight mechanisms)?
8. What measures are taken to hold accountable persons in positions of authority, such as parents, teachers, religious leaders, traditional authorities, politicians and law enforcement officials, at the national and community levels for not complying with or upholding laws and regulations aiming at preventing and eliminating child, early and forced marriage?
9. What actions are taken at the community and local levels to demand accountability for inadequacies in addressing child, early and forced marriage (e.g. monitoring State service delivery for victims and survivors)?
10. What progress has been made in filling the existing gaps in the collection and use of reliable, disaggregated data and evidence for effective programming and informing appropriate measures and actions? Which entities are involved in such collection process?



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • BUREAU DU HAUT COMMISSAIRE AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME  
PALAIS DES NATIONS • 1211 Genève 10, SUISSE

Site [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org) • Tél. +41 22 917 9000 • FAX: +41 22 917 9008 • E-MAIL: [registry@ohchr.org](mailto:registry@ohchr.org)

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights would be grateful if written submissions could be sent to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (United Nations Office at Geneva, CH 1211 Geneva 10; Fax. +41 22 917 90 08; Email: [registry@ohchr.org](mailto:registry@ohchr.org), cc: [couaffowafang@ohchr.org](mailto:couaffowafang@ohchr.org)) by 30 November 2019.

As much as possible, we appreciate receiving submissions:

- Limited to 5 pages (or 2,000 words);
- Sent by email in Microsoft Word format;

Please indicate whether the information provided can be made available on the OHCHR website. Any enquiries may be made to Caroline Ouaffo Wafang at [couaffowafang@ohchr.org](mailto:couaffowafang@ohchr.org), telephone: +41-229179881.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office at Geneva the assurances of its highest consideration.

17 October 2019