

1. Please provide information and data on the prevalence of child, early and forced marriage, in relation to the number of women and girls living in specific humanitarian settings. Kindly provide data disaggregated by sex and age, and in relation to the overall number of women and girls, as well as boys where relevant in the population.

It should be noted that there are no such cases of forced marriages with regard to children in the Republic of Mauritius. However, a minor can contract a marriage as from 16-year-old with the consent of the biological parents or guardian as per Art 145 of the Mauritian Civil Code.

Accordingly, please find below statistics with regard to marriages of minors:

STATISTICS - NUMBER OF CHILDREN MARRIED AGED 16 BUT LESS THAN 18 YEARS

Year	16		17		BOTH MINOR
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
2013	72	0	83	4	159
2014	64	1	67	1	132
2015	84	0	64	2	150
2016	63	0	61	3	127
2017	67	0	56	3	126

2. What measures were taken to strengthen data gathering, contextual analysis and analysis of social factors contributing to child, early and forced marriage in humanitarian settings?

The Civil Status Division is mandated by law to register all civil status events. In this respect data are gathered at the time of publication whereby couples are requested to provide birth certificates dated less than three months prior to the celebration of civil marriages.

Whenever a minor intends to get married he/she should produce a recent birth certificate and the parents/guardians need to be present along with their Identity Cards to ascertain their relationship with the former for publication of the marriage to take place.

3. What are the specific challenges and gaps in the prevention and eliminating of the practice of child, early and forced in humanitarian settings? How could such challenges and gaps be overcome?

The international community has adopted several legal instruments to eliminate the practice. Mauritius has in fact ratified the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa and the African Children's Charter both of which have strong provisions against child marriage. Mauritius has, however, placed a reservation to article 6(b) of the Maputo Protocol which prohibits the marriage of a girl under 18 years of age.

Through the Children's Bill, currently under preparation, it is envisaged to have set the legal age of marriage of age at 18 years.

4. What are the lessons learned and promising practices identified in preventing and eliminating child, early and forced marriage in such settings?

The death of a 13-year-old pregnant girl who was married and then died due to childbirth has sparked discussion on the state's obligations to protect children from early marriage.

Parents may prefer to give their consent for marriage to avoid the stigma that comes with teenage pregnancy, and the knowledge that their children are having sexual relations. The legal age of marriage in Mauritius is 18 but presently minors aged 16 and 17 can get married with the consent of either their parents or, in their absence, a judge.

Sensitization campaigns should be intensified and carried out regularly to make the general population and young adolescents especially, aware of the pre- and post-marriage responsibilities of children. Some are conducted by the National Children's Council through Children's Club, School Child Protection Club, 'Atelier Partage Parents' by Child Development Unit through various programmes and at the level of Residential Care Institutions/ Shelters through counselling by Psychologists and Social Workers.

5. What impact have exacerbating factors had on child, early and forced marriages in humanitarian settings?

Some factors are the societal set up/ mentality within the orthodox family, possibility of child trafficking and prostitution amongst others.

The death of the 13-year-old pregnant girl mentioned at question 4 above was particularly shocking for Mauritius because the rate of child marriage is not high in Mauritius.

The Alternative Care Unit under the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, should work in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to help to report cases of child pregnancy.

6. What measures (e.g., legislative, regulatory, policy and programmatic) are in place or have been adopted to address the root causes and exacerbating factors of child, early, and forced marriage?

The relevant legal provisions regarding marriage are to be found in the Code Civil Mauricien.

(a) Sensitisation and Awareness Campaigns, talks and Empowerment Programmes are carried out through Atelier de Partage Parents, Children's Clubs by NCC, a parastatal body under the aegis of the of the Ministry. In collaboration with key partners, sensitisation is also carried out by Managers of shelters/RCIs on sexual and reproductive Health.

10. What efforts were taken to enhance coordination of programmes in humanitarian context towards the prevention and elimination of child, early and forced marriage?

The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare is in process of reviewing the Child Protection Act so as to be more responsive to the needs of children victims of all forms of violence. In this connection, necessary structures, services and means would be provided for promoting and monitoring the sound physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional and social development of children; shall act as a premiere in offering a chapter in respect of guidance on implementation of the best interest principle of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Also the age of marriage of consent will be set up to 18 years.

Many preventive campaigns are upheld through medias, school settings, various platforms where sensitisations campaigns are disseminated to Public, Police, NGOs and religious bodies.

Stakeholders are informed to notify the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare and the Police whenever such cases are identified.