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Promotion and protection of the rights of children: promotion and protection of the rights of children

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Child, early and forced marriage

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions [69/156](#) of 18 December 2014, [71/175](#) of 19 December 2016, [73/153](#) of 17 December 2018 and [75/167](#) of 16 December 2020 on child, early and forced marriage,

Recalling its resolutions [76/146](#) of 16 December 2021 on the girl child and [75/161](#) of 23 December 2020 on the intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, as well as Human Rights Council resolution [48/6](#) of 8 October 2021, entitled “Child, early and forced marriage in times of crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic”,¹ and all other previous resolutions relating to child, early and forced marriage,

Guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,² as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights³ and the

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-sixth Session, Supplement No. 53A (A/76/53/Add.1)*, chap. IV, sect. A.

² Resolution [217 A \(III\)](#).

³ See resolution [2200 A \(XXI\)](#), annex.



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,⁴ the Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁵ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women⁶ and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,⁷ together with the relevant Optional Protocols thereto,⁸ as well as other relevant human rights instruments, and recalling the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages,⁹

Reaffirming the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,¹⁰ as well as the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,¹¹ the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action¹² and the outcome documents of their review conferences,

Taking note of the relevant agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women,

Reaffirming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,¹³ noting the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda and the range of Goals and targets relevant to eliminating child, early and forced marriage, including target 5.3, and its pledge to leave no one behind, and recommitting to endeavouring to reach the furthest behind first and to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as well as their attainment and full enjoyment of all human rights, which are essential to achieving sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development,

Taking note with appreciation of the ongoing United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children's Fund Global Programme to End Child Marriage, as well as international, regional, national and subnational instruments, mechanisms and initiatives to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage, including the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage, the Regional Action Plan to End Child Marriage in South Asia, the Joint Inter-Agency Programme to End Child Marriage and Early Unions in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Southern African Development Community Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage, and further encouraging coordinated and comprehensive approaches to action at all levels and across sectors,

Recognizing that child, early and forced marriage is a harmful practice that violates, abuses or impairs human rights and is linked to and perpetuates other harmful practices and human rights violations and that such violations have a disproportionately negative impact on women and girls, particularly those living in vulnerable situations and hard-to-reach areas, putting them, inter alia, at heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence, threatening girls' education and future economic opportunities as well as their physical and mental health, and underscoring the human rights obligations and commitments of States to respect, promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women and girls and to prevent and eliminate the practice of child, early and forced marriage,

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1577, No. 27531.

⁶ Ibid., vol. 1249, No. 20378.

⁷ Ibid., vol. 2515, No. 44910.

⁸ Ibid., vols. 2171, 2173 and 2983, No. 27531; *ibid.*, vol. 2131, No. 20378; and *ibid.*, vol. 2518, No. 44910.

⁹ Ibid., vol. 521, No. 7525.

¹⁰ [A/CONF.157/24 \(Part I\)](#), chap. III.

¹¹ *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

¹² *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

¹³ Resolution [70/1](#).

Reaffirming that marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses;

Recognizing that social protection, access to quality education in a safe environment, a strong social work system, meaningful participation and inclusion in decision-making, quality health-care services, nutrition, full access to clean water, including safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, including menstrual health and hygiene and affordable menstrual products, skills development and the combating of all forms of discrimination and violence against girls, among other things, are all necessary for the empowerment of the girl child,

Expressing concern that despite the recent progress made globally towards ending child, early and forced marriage, including a decrease of 15 per cent in the proportion of girls who were married before the age of 18 in the past decade, progress has been uneven across regions, both between and within countries, and that existing data show that, at the current pace of progress, target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which involves ending the practice by 2030, will not be met in any region of the world,

Noting with concern that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has undermined the hard-won gains achieved on ending harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage, and continues to compromise the ability of Member States to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including target 5.3, by 2030,

Noting that the current pace of change is not sufficient to eliminate child, early and forced marriage by 2030, where, in addition to the 12 million child, early and forced marriages that occur every year, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are projected to result in more than 13 million additional cases of child, early and forced marriage that otherwise would have been averted by 2030, with girls from poor households, rural and remote areas, those living in humanitarian situations and those who have dropped out of formal education particularly at risk,

Recognizing that global health threats, climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, more frequent and intense natural disasters, armed conflicts, violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, and related humanitarian emergencies and the forced displacement of people have particularly negative impacts on women and girls, including those with disabilities, while recognizing also that poverty, including the feminization of poverty, insecurity, early and unintended pregnancy and lack of access to quality education are also among the root causes of child, early and forced marriage,

Recognizing also that, in some contexts, the practice of child, early and forced marriage may include arrangements that are not formalized, registered or recognized by a religious or State authority, that such arrangements should be addressed in policies and programmes on child, early and forced marriage and that the gathering of information on these arrangements will help to develop responses for affected girls and women,

Noting with concern that deep-rooted gender discrimination, inequalities and stereotypes, harmful practices, perceptions and customs, patriarchal attitudes and structures and discriminatory social norms that consider women and girls to be inferior to men and boys are not only obstacles to the full enjoyment of human rights and the empowerment of all women and girls, but are also among the root causes of child, early and forced marriage, and that the persistence of child, early and forced marriage places children, in particular girls, at greater risk of being exposed to and encountering various forms of discrimination and violence throughout their lives,

Noting with concern also that child, early and forced marriage remains common in rural areas and among the poorest communities and has increased among the

poorest communities over the past decade, and acknowledging the correlation between child, early and forced marriage and economic insecurity, poverty and lack of income opportunities and that the immediate alleviation and eradication of extreme poverty must remain a high priority for the international community,

Recognizing that child, early and forced marriage is underrecognized and underreported and often coincides with impunity and lack of accountability, particularly at the community level, and that the persistence of child, early and forced marriage places women and girls at greater risk of being exposed to and encountering various forms of discrimination and violence throughout their lives, including marital rape and sexual, physical and psychological violence, and reinforces the lower status of girls and adolescent girls in society,

Recognizing also that child, early and forced marriage is a major impediment to the achievement of the economic empowerment of women and their social and economic development, including through the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work shouldered by girls and women, thereby hampering the ability of women to enter, advance and remain in the labour market, and that this harmful practice can impede economic independence and impose direct and indirect short- and long-term costs on society, and recognizing further that the economic autonomy of women can expand their options for leaving abusive and violent relationships,

Recognizing further that child, early and forced marriage undermines women's and girls' autonomy and decision-making in all aspects of their lives and that the empowerment of and investment in all women and girls, as well as the strengthening of their voice, agency, leadership and full and meaningful participation in all decisions that affect them, are key factors in breaking the cycle of gender inequality and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, violence and poverty and are critical, inter alia, for sustainable development, peace, security, democracy and inclusive economic growth,

Bearing in mind the crucial importance of civil registration and vital statistics, including births, deaths and marriages, for the realization of the human rights of individuals, especially girls,

Recognizing that men and boys, who also benefit from gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, should play a role as strategic partners and allies of women and girls, including by supporting women and girls at risk, and that their meaningful engagement can contribute to eliminating discriminatory social norms that perpetuate gender-based violence, as well as harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, ending this practice and achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and the full enjoyment of all their human rights,

Recognizing also that families, communities and religious, traditional and community leaders have an essential role to play in eliminating negative social norms and harmful traditional or customary practices and confronting gender inequality, and recognizing further that empowering girls, including already married girls, requires their active and meaningful participation in decision-making processes in all matters affecting them and as agents of change in their own lives and communities, including through women's organizations and girls-led organizations, with the active support and engagement of their parents, legal guardians, families and care providers, boys and men, as well as the wider community,

Recognizing further the need to support girls and women who were subjected to child, early and forced marriage, as well as their children, and underscoring the importance of removing structural barriers that prevent their access to services that respond to their specific needs,

Expressing deep concern that child, early and forced marriage disproportionately affects girls who have had minimal, disrupted or no access to formal and informal education and is itself a significant obstacle to educational opportunities and the development of employable and life skills for girls and young women, in particular girls who are forced to drop out of school owing to pregnancy, marriage, childbirth and/or childcare and other unpaid care and domestic work responsibilities, as well as stigma relating to menstruation, gender stereotypes and negative social norms that confine married women and girls to the home, and that educational possibilities and opportunities are directly related to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full enjoyment of all their human rights, women's employment and economic opportunities and their full, effective, equal and meaningful participation in economic, social and cultural development, governance and decision-making,

Acknowledging that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, girls, particularly adolescents, including those who are among the poorest, those living in rural and remote areas and those in vulnerable situations, are at particular risk of dropping out and not returning to school even as education facilities reopen, thereby increasing their vulnerability to poverty, child, early and forced marriage, all forms of violence, including sexual violence, and early pregnancy,

Noting with concern that, owing to school closures, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the digital divides, both between and within countries, including the gender digital divide and vast disparities in the availability of learning materials, including access to the Internet and communication devices, particularly for rural and remote communities, while recognizing that with the increased reliance on virtual learning, many schools, especially in developing countries, lack adequate technology and equipment to provide online teaching, which leads to limited access or lack of access to quality education for many children, particularly girls, further increasing their vulnerability to child, early and forced marriage,

Recognizing that although digital technologies can offer increasing opportunities and benefits, the increased reliance on virtual learning and the challenges faced by children in accessing the Internet and digital devices, including lack of equipment and digital literacy skills, can limit access to quality education and increase inequalities between and within countries, with internally displaced children, refugees, migrants, those living in humanitarian situations as well as those with disabilities and those living in rural and remote areas and from the poorest households being the most affected,

Noting with concern that, despite gains in providing access to education, girls are still more likely than boys to remain excluded from primary and secondary education, and recognizing that the attendance of girls at school can be affected by negative perceptions of menstruation and lack of means to maintain safe personal hygiene, such as water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools that meet the needs of girls,

Recognizing that child, early and forced marriage remains a serious threat to multiple aspects of the physical and psychological health of women and girls, including but not limited to their sexual and reproductive health, significantly increasing the risk of early, frequent and unintended pregnancy, maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity, obstetric fistula and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS, as well as increasing vulnerability to all forms of violence,

Recognizing also that the incidence and risk of child, early and forced marriage are highly exacerbated during humanitarian emergencies, situations of forced displacement, armed conflict, public health emergencies and natural disasters because of various factors, including insecurity, increased risks of sexual and gender-based

violence, the misconception of providing protection through marriage, gender inequality, lack of access to continuous, inclusive and equitable quality education, the stigmatization of pregnancy outside marriage, the absence of family planning services, disruption in social networks and routines, increased poverty and the absence of livelihood opportunities, and that this requires increased attention, appropriate protection measures and coordinated action by relevant stakeholders, with the full and meaningful participation of the women and girls affected, from the early stages of humanitarian emergencies, and recognizing further the importance of addressing the increased vulnerability of women and girls to sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation in those situations,

Recognizing further that preventing and ending child, early and forced marriage and supporting married girls and women affected by this harmful practice require appropriate gender-responsive and age-sensitive protection, prevention and response measures, as well as coordinated action by relevant stakeholders, and that existing gaps in the collection and use of reliable data and evidence remain a major challenge for programming and informing appropriate measures and actions,

Recognizing that research initiatives and data collection at the global, regional, national and subnational levels provide critical information on child, early and forced marriage and how trends related to child, early and forced marriage change over time,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General;¹⁴
2. *Reaffirms* the commitment at the very heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind and commit to taking more tangible steps to support people in vulnerable situations and to reach the furthest behind first, and emphasizes the commitment to get back onto a track of accelerated progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including target 5.3, noting that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and their full enjoyment of their human rights, will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets, while reiterating that States will not be able to achieve the ambitious Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda without a revitalized and enhanced Global Partnership and comparably ambitious means of implementation;
3. *Calls upon* States, with the participation of relevant stakeholders, including women and girls, men and boys, parents and other family members, teachers, religious, traditional and community leaders, civil society, organizations led by girls, women's organizations, youth and human rights groups, the media and the private sector, to develop and implement holistic, comprehensive and coordinated age- and gender-responsive, victim-centred and multisectoral responses and strategies that respect human rights to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage, to support girls and women who are affected or at risk, who have fled such a marriage or whose marriage has dissolved, and widowed girls or women who were married as girls, including through the strengthening of child protection systems, social work programmes, protection mechanisms such as safe shelters, mental health and psychosocial support services, empowerment and livelihood support, community sensitization, family reunification, access to justice and the sharing of best practices across borders;
4. *Also calls upon* States to develop and implement measures at all levels to end child, early and forced marriage, including national and subnational action plans where appropriate, and to make adequate resources, including financing, available across relevant sectors, including health, nutrition, sanitation, shelter, protection, governance and education;

¹⁴ [A/77/282](#).

5. *Urges* States to enact, enforce and uphold laws and policies aimed at preventing and ending child, early and forced marriage, protecting those at risk and addressing the needs of those affected, and work towards the coherence of these laws and policies at the local level, to ensure that marriage is entered into only with the informed, free and full consent of the intending spouses;

6. *Calls upon* States to enact, enforce and uphold laws concerning a minimum age of marriage, to monitor their application and to progressively amend laws with lower minimum ages of marriage and/or ages of majority to 18 and engage all relevant authorities to ensure that these laws are well known;

7. *Urges* States to repeal or amend laws and remove any provisions that enable perpetrators of rape, sexual exploitation and abuse or abduction to escape prosecution and punishment by marrying their victims and that may enable, justify, or lead to child, early and forced marriage, and to engage traditional and religious leaders, among others, to eliminate traditional practices that resolve sexual violence incidents through marriage;

8. *Calls upon* States to strengthen their efforts to ensure the timely registration of births and marriages, especially for individuals living in rural and remote areas, including by identifying and removing all physical, administrative, procedural and any other barriers that impede access to registration and by providing, where lacking, mechanisms for the registration of customary and religious marriages, as well as working to ensure that the registration of births and marriages remains accessible in emergencies or is re-established as quickly as possible when affected;

9. *Also calls upon* States to promote the full and meaningful participation of and active consultation with children and adolescents, including those who are hardest to reach and already married girls, on all issues affecting them and to raise awareness about their rights, including the negative impact of child, early and forced marriage, through safe spaces, forums and support networks, including in digital spaces, that provide accessible information, life skills, inclusive and equitable quality education, and leadership skills training and opportunities, including catch-up and literacy education, and lifelong learning opportunities, remote learning opportunities and childcare, as needed, to be empowered, to express themselves, to participate meaningfully in all decisions that affect them and to become agents of change within their communities;

10. *Further calls upon* States to promote awareness-raising about the harmful effects of child, early and forced marriage on the individual and wider society and the benefits of ending this harmful practice, including through open dialogue with all stakeholders, including girls and boys, women and men, religious, traditional and community leaders, parents, legal guardians and other family members, to work with local communities to combat negative social norms and gender stereotypes that condone child, early and forced marriage, to empower parents and communities to abandon the practice and to empower all women and girls to make informed decisions about their lives;

11. *Recognizes* that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment and in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding and that parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child, acknowledging the need to support their capacity to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage, and reaffirming that the best interests of the child will be their basic concern;

12. *Urges* Governments, while addressing child, early and forced marriage, to confront family poverty and social exclusion through investing in family-oriented

policies addressing the multidimensional aspects of poverty, focusing on education, health, employment, social security, livelihoods and social cohesion, paying special attention to gender-sensitive social protection measures, child allowances for parents and pension benefits for older persons and protecting, supporting and empowering children, including girls, in child-headed households;

13. *Also urges* Governments, with the collaboration of relevant stakeholders, to tackle poverty, including the feminization of poverty, lack of economic opportunities for women throughout their life course and other entrenched economic incentives that act as drivers of child, early and forced marriage, including by ensuring the rights of all women and girls to inheritance and property, without discrimination of any kind, including in relation to marital status, their equal access with men and boys to social protection, childcare services and direct financial services, to support the right of girls to receive and continue their education, including through their continued enrolment in school during pregnancy and re-enrolment in school after childbirth, to develop livelihood opportunities through access to inclusive and equitable quality education, including technical and vocational education, and training and life skills education, including entrepreneurship and financial and digital literacy, and to promote freedom of movement, women's equal access to full and productive employment and decent work, including waged and salaried work, as well as equal political participation and rights to inherit and own land;

14. *Urges* Member States to ensure access to services and education for women who were married in childhood and for girls who are married, are pregnant or are mothers;

15. *Encourages* States to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of already married girls and women affected by this harmful practice, to promote equality in all aspects of marriage and its dissolution and to address their specific needs, such as through targeted and tailored programmes, including social work programmes, that provide social services to protect them from sexual and gender-based violence, increase their decision-making power, make it easier for them to seek formal employment, increase their economic independence and financial literacy, access quality education, skills development programmes and lifelong learning opportunities, ensure their equal access to health-care services and information and decrease their social isolation, including by establishing or strengthening childcare services and working with communities to change discriminatory social norms;

16. *Calls upon* States to promote and protect the right of women and girls to equal access to education through enhanced emphasis on free and quality primary and secondary education, including catch-up and literacy education for those who have not received formal education, have left school early or were forced to leave school, including because of marriage, pregnancy, childbirth and/or childcare responsibilities, which empowers young women and girls to make informed decisions about their lives, employment, economic opportunities and health, including through scientifically accurate and age-appropriate comprehensive education that is relevant to cultural contexts, that provides adolescent girls and boys and young women and men, in and out of school, consistent with their evolving capacities, and with appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians, with the best interests of the child as their basic concern, information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, gender equality and the empowerment of women, human rights, physical, psychological and pubertal development and power in relationships between women and men, to enable them to build self-esteem and foster informed decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills and to develop respectful relationships, in full partnership with young persons, parents, legal guardians, caregivers, educators and health-care providers, in order to contribute to ending child, early and forced marriage;

17. *Recognizes* that education is one of the most effective ways to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage and to help married women and girls to make informed decisions about their lives, and urges States to remove barriers to education, including by investing in quality primary and secondary education for every child in a safe environment, through adequate financing, ensuring that married girls and boys, pregnant girls and women and young parents continue to have access to schooling, improving access to quality formal education and skills development, especially for those living in remote or insecure areas, improving the safety of girls at and on the way to and from school, providing safe and adequate sanitation, including for menstrual hygiene management, adopting and implementing laws and policies to prohibit, prevent and address violence and to hold perpetrators accountable, strengthening and intensifying their efforts to implement effective violence prevention and response activities in schools and communities, engaging men and boys, community leaders and parents, educating children from a young age regarding their human rights and the importance of treating all people with dignity and respect and designing educational programmes and teaching materials that support respectful relationships, non-violent behaviours, gender equality and empowerment of women and girls;

18. *Encourages* States to mitigate the impact of past and present school closures, particularly for those learners who are among the poorest and in vulnerable situations, especially girls, and to continue to strengthen the protection of schools, making them free from all forms of violence, bearing in mind that special measures to ensure equal access contribute to achieving equal opportunity and combating exclusion by eliminating social, economic and gender disparities in education and ensuring school attendance, in particular for girls, children with disabilities, pregnant adolescent girls, children living in poverty, Indigenous children, children of African descent, children living with HIV/AIDS, persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, migrant children, children living in rural or remote areas and children in vulnerable situations;

19. *Calls on* States to pursue efforts and ensure greater connectivity to bridge the digital divides in access to the Internet, both between and within countries, and the gender digital divide in school and learning opportunities, with greater accessibility for the most affected girls and women, such as those who live in rural and remote areas or refugee camps or those who come from lower-income households and girls with disabilities, and address all forms of violence and discrimination against all women and girls in digital contexts;

20. *Calls upon* Member States, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and other health-related global challenges, building on previous experience, to ensure that school closures are a last resort and are proportionate to wider public health restrictions and that girls are protected and supported in returning to school once it is deemed safe to do so, and in this regard calls upon Member States and other relevant stakeholders to take the appropriate measures in order to ensure proper training of teachers and other educational professionals and the availability of and access to learning materials and remote learning platforms during the pandemic, and to bridge the digital divide, including barriers such as poor access to connectivity, lack of affordability of connection and devices, digital illiteracy, limited digital skills, absence of locally relevant digital content, and gender stereotypes and negative social norms, in order to provide distance learning opportunities, inter alia, Internet, television and radio teaching alternatives, especially in developing countries;

21. *Encourages* States to adopt, as appropriate, and implement inclusive policies and programmes to promote technical and vocational training and skills development and lifelong learning opportunities, including in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in information and communications technology, as

well as higher educational opportunities for women and girls, including those at risk of or affected by child, early and forced marriage, so as to enable them to gain the knowledge, attitudes and skills that they need to fulfil their full potential;

22. *Urges* States to address the root causes of gender inequality, including gender stereotypes and negative social norms, attitudes and behaviours, the socioeconomic drivers of violence and unequal power relations in which women and girls are viewed as subordinate to men and boys, which perpetuate child, early and forced marriage, by developing and implementing, inter alia, robust and comprehensive interventions addressing the gender inequality and social norms that underlie the practice and awareness-raising programmes that provide accurate information about the negative impact of child, early and forced marriage on women and girls and society at large, including through social media, the Internet and community communication and dissemination tools;

23. *Urges* Governments to promote, respect and protect the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health through the development and enforcement of policies and legal frameworks and the strengthening of health systems, including health information systems, that make universally accessible and available quality, gender-responsive, adolescent-friendly health services, sexual and reproductive health-care services, information and commodities, HIV and AIDS prevention, testing, treatment and care, mental health services and nutrition interventions and prevention, treatment of and care for obstetric fistula and other obstetric complications by providing the continuum of services, including family planning, prenatal and postnatal care, skilled birth attendance, emergency obstetric care and post-partum care;

24. *Also urges* Governments to promote and protect the human rights of all women and girls, including the right of women, and those girls who have been subjected to child, early and forced marriage, to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, and to adopt and accelerate the implementation of laws, policies and programmes that protect and enable the enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including reproductive rights, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences;

25. *Urges* States to formulate or review, as needed, appropriate policies, programmes or strategies in order to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage, and address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and violence, including domestic violence, which may occur against women and girls subjected to child, early and forced marriage, as well as strengthen child protection systems and social work programmes through gender-responsive and age-sensitive policies and provide targets and timetables for implementation, while paying special attention to girls with disabilities, Indigenous girls and girls in vulnerable situations, including girls facing social and economic exclusion, and those living in rural and remote areas;

26. *Also urges* States to uphold the human rights of all women and girls with disabilities, and recognizes that disability can increase the risk of child, early and forced marriage, and the importance of ensuring that services and programmes designed to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage are inclusive of, accessible to and proactively engage with women and girls with disabilities;

27. *Further urges* States to ensure access to justice and accountability mechanisms and remedies for the effective implementation and enforcement of laws aimed at preventing and eliminating child, early and forced marriage, including by working towards the elimination of loopholes in customary laws, where they exist,

and by informing women, girls and boys about their rights under relevant laws, including in marriage and at its dissolution, improving legal infrastructure, removing all barriers to access to legal counselling, assistance and remedies, training law enforcement officers, the judiciary and professionals working with women and children and ensuring oversight of the handling of cases of child, early and forced marriage;

28. *Calls upon* States, with the collaboration of relevant stakeholders, to ensure that COVID-19 response measures and future emergency response and recovery plans are comprehensive, participatory, age- and gender-sensitive and adequately funded, promote inclusive, gender-equal and sustainable economies and societies, and eliminate inequality and exclusion and poverty, which are among the root causes of child, early and forced marriage;

29. *Also calls upon* States to mitigate the impact of emergencies and improve on response measures by strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders working at the local and national levels, which are often best placed to reach communities, to continue their essential work with girls, families and local communities to prevent and respond to child, early and forced marriage, particularly those working with communities in vulnerable situations;

30. *Further calls upon* States to monitor the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the prevalence of child, early and forced marriage in relation to changes in gender roles, including in domestic work, non-return to school, hindered access to services, rates of early, frequent and unintended pregnancy and the economic situation of families;

31. *Calls upon* States to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's and girls' disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, including by making efforts to change gender roles in domestic work and care responsibilities, and tackle the feminization of poverty, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to address all forms of discrimination and gender inequality, including gender stereotypes and negative social norms, attitudes and behaviours and unequal power relations in which women and girls are viewed as subordinate to men and boys, that are at the root of these imbalances;

32. *Also calls upon* States to develop and implement, in consultation with and with the full, effective, equal and meaningful participation of women and, as appropriate, girls, and integrate into humanitarian responses, from the early stages of humanitarian emergencies, measures to address the increased vulnerability of women and girls, particularly adolescent girls, to child, early and forced marriage, and to protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation during humanitarian emergencies, situations of forced displacement, armed conflict, natural disasters and public health emergencies, including by ensuring their access to such services as health, education and child protection, as well as strengthening follow-up and interventions to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage in humanitarian settings, as well as to address the needs of those affected and to ensure that the provision of essential services during emergencies respects the rights of girls and women and is addressed in national response plans, including life skills education, gender-sensitive mental health and psychosocial support services, as well as health and information services, including sexual and reproductive health-care services;

33. *Urges* States to recognize and promote awareness of the disproportionate and distinct effects of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters on women and girls, in particular those with disabilities and those facing violence, discrimination and displacement, harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and insecurity of land tenure, income and

food, and ensure that policies and programmes reflect these impacts, and take targeted action to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacities of all women and girls, including in cities and tropical, arctic, coastal, mountainous, rural and remote areas;

34. *Calls upon* States to take a comprehensive, rights-based, age- and gender-responsive, survivor-centred and multisectoral approach that takes into account linkages with other harmful practices in the prevention of and response to child, early and forced marriage in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and other multidimensional challenges such as humanitarian situations, climate change and natural disasters, and to pay particular attention to the specific needs of all women and girls, in particular those in vulnerable situations and those experiencing various forms of violence, discrimination, stigmatization, exclusion and inequalities, including in humanitarian situations, in terms of, inter alia, access to essential services such as safe spaces and shelters, access to social work services and family reunification, as well as access to other social protection services, health-care services, safe and affordable drinking water and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, including menstrual hygiene, as well as access to education, including early childhood education and lifelong learning, and to timely registration of births and marriages;

35. *Also calls upon* States to pay particular attention to the specific needs of children, especially adolescent girls, who are more likely to be subjected to child, early and forced marriage, in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at all levels, and promoting their effective and meaningful participation in decisions that affect them, by prioritizing the provision of child- and adolescent-centred services, with a focus on equitable access, particularly in relation to schooling, nutrition programmes, immunization, maternal and newborn care, and child protection programmes;

36. *Further calls upon* States to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on families and communities by, inter alia, expanding programmes that protect them against economic shocks, including poverty eradication measures, labour policies, public services and gender-responsive social protection programmes;

37. *Calls upon* States to ensure uninterrupted access to and funding for essential health-care services, including sexual and reproductive health-care services, and to safe and affordable drinking water and adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, including menstrual hygiene, and including in disadvantaged areas such as rural communities, informal settlements and humanitarian settings;

38. *Encourages* relevant United Nations entities and agencies, regional and subregional organizations, within their respective mandates, civil society and other relevant actors and human rights mechanisms to continue to collaborate among themselves and with Member States in developing and implementing strategies and policies at the national, regional and international levels to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage, as well as to support those who were married as children;

39. *Encourages* relevant United Nations entities and agencies, regional and subregional organizations, the international financial institutions, civil society and other relevant actors and human rights mechanisms to continue to collaborate with Member States and national statistical agencies in order to assist in strengthening and building capacity for data and reporting systems for analysing, monitoring and publicly reporting on progress to end child, early and forced marriage based on evidence and addressing data gaps, where they may exist, especially on girls with disabilities;

40. *Affirms* the need for States and relevant United Nations entities and agencies to improve the safe and ethical collection and use of quantitative, qualitative

and comparable data on violence against women and girls and on harmful practices, including on those hardest to reach, disaggregated by sex, age, disability, civil status, race, ethnicity, migratory status, geographical location, socioeconomic status, education level and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, as appropriate, to identify and focus action, decision-making, policies and programmes on those furthest behind, to enhance research and dissemination of evidence-based and good practices relating to the prevention and elimination of child, early and forced marriage and to strengthen monitoring and impact assessment of existing policies and programmes as a means of ensuring their effectiveness and implementation;

41. *Encourages* the international community to fulfil its commitment in supporting developing countries, particularly African countries, least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in strengthening the capacity of national statistical offices and data systems to ensure access to high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data while ensuring national ownership in supporting and tracking progress, including in the context of child, early and forced marriage;

42. *Encourages* Governments to include information on progress towards eliminating child, early and forced marriage, including best practices and implementation efforts, in their national reports to relevant international treaty bodies and the universal periodic review and within the national voluntary reviews conducted through the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

43. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report to the General Assembly, based on evidence, before the end of its seventy-eighth session, on progress towards ending child, early and forced marriage worldwide as well as best practices for programmes aimed at ending the practice and supporting already married girls and women affected by this practice, including girls' and women's empowerment programmes, gaps in funding, research and data collection, using information provided by Member States, United Nations bodies, agencies, funds and programmes, civil society and other relevant stakeholders;

44. *Decides* to consider the issue of child, early and forced marriage at its seventy-ninth session under the item entitled "Promotion and protection of the rights of children", taking into account the multifaceted and worldwide nature of this issue.