



## **Behind Closed Doors: Child and Early Marriage as Slavery**

**International institutions must explicitly recognise key incidences of child and early marriage as constituting slavery and slavery-like practices<sup>1</sup>**

### **I. Executive Summary**

The issue of child, early and forced marriage and its impact on health and education has been brought to the forefront of the international development agenda in recent years, largely due to the efforts of organisations such as [Girls not Brides](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org) and [UNICEF](http://www.unicef.org). Although both boys and girls fall victim to child, early and forced marriage, it should be noted that the vast majority of victims are female and the sexual and reproductive health issues arising from child and early marriage have an overwhelmingly disproportionate impact on girls. A 2003 comparison by Girls not Brides between the number of young women and young men aged 15-19 who were married revealed a ratio of 72 to 1 in Mali, 8 to 1 in the United States and 6 to 1 in El Salvador.<sup>2</sup>

According to UNICEF, 250 million women alive today were married before their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday.<sup>3</sup> Among other health implications, child and early marriage is directly responsible for high levels of pregnancy among young brides; girls under 15 are five times more likely to die in childbirth than women aged 20-24.<sup>4</sup> As such, efforts to tackle child and early marriage are closely tied to United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goal 5, which sought a three-fourths reduction in the maternal mortality rate by 2015. Moreover, child and early marriage effectively puts an end to child spouses' education, thereby undermining their future prospects as well as global efforts to promote gender equality and empower women. The highest rates of child marriage are concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, while, due to population size, the highest absolute numbers of child marriage take place in South Asia, where 46% of girls marry before the age of 18 and one in five marry before the age of 15.<sup>5</sup>

Anti-Slavery International endorses the position of organisations seeking to highlight the negative impact that child, early and forced marriage has on development progress and human rights. In addition, Anti-Slavery International hypothesises that while forced marriage clearly amounts to slavery due to the inherent power of ownership wielded over

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<sup>1</sup> Primarily authored by Rachel Borrell

<sup>2</sup> Girls not Brides, *What is the Impact?*, <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/what-is-the-impact/>.

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF, *Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects*, 2014, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF, *Child Marriages: 39,000 Every Day*, 7 March 2013, <[http://www.unicef.org/media/media\\_68114.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_68114.html)>; Girls not Brides, *Health*, <http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/themes/health/>.

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF, *Improving Children's Lives, Transforming the Future*, September 2014, p. 67; Girls not Brides, *Understanding the Scale of Child Marriage*, October 2014, p. 3.

the vulnerable party, it is also the case that in certain circumstances, child and early marriage can meet the legal definition of slavery and slavery-like practices, even if the marriage was not bought about by overtly forceful means.

The previous Special Rapporteur on Contemporary forms of Slavery, Gulnara Shahinian, highlighted that the relationship between marriage and slavery has not been comprehensively addressed at the international level.<sup>6</sup> Currently, there is an enormous gap between international standards of protection and the reality experienced by those that fall victim to slavery and slavery-like practices as a result of marriage.

With this paper, Anti-Slavery International argues that the UN should intensify efforts to combat situations of slavery and slavery-like practices arising from child and early marriage. To this end, the International Labour Organization (ILO) should include certain incidences of child and early marriage in its child labour estimates. This conclusion is based on the finding that incidences of child and early marriage can amount to slavery, forced labour and trafficking and as such come within the ILO's purview under ILO Convention 182.

### **i. Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to provide a clear analytical framework of when and how child and early marriage constitutes slavery, forced labour and trafficking and to propose an initial plan of action to galvanise international efforts against these often overlooked forms of slavery.

## **II. Introduction**

In its April 2013 report "[Out of the Shadows: Child Marriage and Slavery](#)", Anti-Slavery International provided a consolidated analysis of over 50 reports and articles on child marriage. The report is one of the few pieces of research to shed light on how child marriage can operate as a thin veil of respectability behind which slavery occurs with apparent impunity.

Building upon the resolution on child, early and forced marriage adopted by the UN General Assembly on 21 November 2014,<sup>7</sup> Anti-Slavery International reiterates that in many instances of child and early marriage, as well as forced marriage, the conditions suffered by the vulnerable spouse are akin to practices associated with slavery, forced labour and trafficking.

Anti-Slavery International proposes that the level of risk of slavery and slavery-like practices experienced by child spouses is heightened in the case of girls due to patriarchal norms that cut across different cultural contexts. Moreover, the younger the age of the child concerned, the less likely that the marriage has been entered into with full, informed and free consent. A child's ability to resist attempts to challenge his or her exercise of

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<sup>6</sup> Thematic Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences, to the UN Human Rights Council, on Servile Marriage, UN doc. A/HRC/21/41 (July 2012), para. 95.

<sup>7</sup> See Girls Not Brides, *statement on UN General Assembly resolution on child, early and forced marriage*, 21 November 2014, <<http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/girls-brides-statement-un-general-assembly-resolution-child-early-forced-marriage/>>.

free will within the marriage itself is also lessened by younger age and, in the case of females, by the common gender roles assigned to girls and women.

**i. Definition of terms**

“Child marriage” is the marriage of individuals under the age of 18. The term “early marriage” refers to individuals who are married before the age of 18 but have already reached the age of majority in their country of residence, meaning that they are no longer considered a child under national laws. The term “forced marriage” relates to those individuals who are not necessarily married before the age of 18 but are married against their will due to pressure or abuse. It is important to note that early and child marriage often take place by means of force and coercion and, as such, some marriages can be equally classified as child/early and as forced.

**ii. Definitions of Slavery, Forced Labour and Trafficking under International Law**

“Slavery” was first defined in international law in the League of Nations’ Slavery, Servitude, Forced Labour and Similar Institutions and Practices Convention of 1926 (hereafter the 1926 Convention) as:

*“the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.”<sup>8</sup>*

The 1956 UN Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (hereafter the 1956 Supplementary Convention) subsequently defined institutions and practices similar to slavery, including the following:

*“(c) Any institution or practice whereby:*

- (i) A woman, without the right to refuse, is promised or given in marriage on payment of a consideration in money or in kind to her parents, guardian, family or any other person or group; or*
  - (ii) The husband of a woman, his family or his clan, has the right to transfer her to another person for value received or otherwise; or*
  - (iii) A woman on the death of her husband is liable to be inherited by another person.*
- (d) Any institution or practice whereby a child or young person under the age of 18 years, is delivered by either or both of his natural parents or by his guardian to another person, whether for reward or not, with a view to the exploitation of the child or young person or of his labour”<sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>8</sup> League of Nations’ Slavery, Servitude, Forced Labour and Similar Institutions and Practices Convention, Article 1 (1).

<sup>9</sup> 1956 United Nations (UN) Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, Article 1 (c) and (d). With regards to the definition in Article 1(c)(i), it is important to note that the forced marriage of an adult woman without “payment of a consideration in money or in kind...” is still contrary to international legal standards, as specified by the UN Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, which states that: “No marriage shall be legally entered into without the full and free consent of both parties” (Article 1(1)). Moreover, forced marriages that do not include a monetary or other transaction should still be considered slavery if powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised by one

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines forced or compulsory labour in ILO Convention 29 as:

*“... all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.”<sup>10</sup>*

The term “under the menace of any penalty” can include violence at the extreme, but also economic threats, the loss of rights or privileges and subtler psychological pressure.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the work in question does not have to be officially recognised as an economic activity for it to fall under the definition of forced labour. For example, the ILO has expressly recognised the trafficking of children for sexual exploitation as forced labour.<sup>12</sup>

The 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol), supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime defines trafficking as:

*“the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”<sup>13</sup>*

In considering child and early marriage it is important to note that the Palermo Protocol also states that, in contrast to those over 18:

*“The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article”.<sup>14</sup>*

As such, the Palermo Protocol recognises that any person under 18 years old who is moved from one location to another by *any* means for the purpose of exploitation is considered to have been trafficked. This is the case whether the child has been taken across borders or simply moved to another household within the same village. It is also child trafficking if the child concerned ostensibly agreed to the transfer themselves. For example, the handing over of a child to another family, even with the child’s ‘consent’, can be child trafficking if the child is subsequently exploited in their new home.<sup>15</sup>

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spouse over the other. Furthermore, if an adult spouse has been forced or coerced into the marriage for the purposes of exploitation, it may amount to trafficking.

<sup>10</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 29, Article 2(1).

<sup>11</sup> ILO, *A Global Alliance against Forced Labour: Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, Report I (B) of the Director General (2005), p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9, para. 35; and pp. 44-45, para. 213.

<sup>13</sup> Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000, Article 3 (a).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 3 (c)

<sup>15</sup> Anti-Slavery International, *Out of the Shadows: Child Marriage and Slavery*, April 2013, [http://www.antislavery.org/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2013/c/child\\_marriage\\_final.pdf](http://www.antislavery.org/includes/documents/cm_docs/2013/c/child_marriage_final.pdf), p. 26.

### III. Key Incidences of Child, Early and Forced Marriage Constituting Slavery

As mentioned above, clear cut cases of forced marriage require little explanation to be readily recognised as slavery. Notably, the abduction or sale of girls and women to become ‘wives’ both in conflict and peacetime situations clearly amount to slavery as they allow the perpetrator to exercise powers of ownership over the victim. For example, Human Rights Watch has conducted interviews with individuals abducted by the insurgency group *Boko Haram* in which interviewees spoke of being forced to marry their captors and being sexually abused and raped, along with other forms of abuse, such as forced labour and forced participation in military operations.<sup>16</sup>

In Niger and Nigeria the ‘wahaya’ practice continues to exist in which women and children are sold into sexual and domestic slavery as unofficial ‘fifth wives’. They are known as such because they are in addition to the four wives legally permitted in Niger and Nigeria. In a case documented by Anti-Slavery International along with its partner organisation Timidria, Tikirit Amoudar, 45 years old, describes how she was sold at aged 10 and remained as a ‘wahaya’ for 15 years.

*“My master, a man called Amola Zono, lived in his family village of Toudoun Adaraoua. He was Hausa. I was his only wahaya and my clothes set me apart from his four legal wives. They dressed decently, while my clothes barely covered me. He used to come to me at night in secret for sex. My workload was heavy: fetching water for all the family; fetching water for livestock (over 100 cattle); hulling and pounding grain (millet and sorghum) for food and foodstuffs; providing firewood for the family; large preparations – the day before and on the days of community gatherings in the master’s fields during the rainy season (for 30 to 40 people); washing up; preparing the mistresses’ and the master’s beds; looking after the children and keeping the courtyard clean – these were my tasks until my master’s death.”<sup>17</sup>*

Aside from these cases, and bearing the above legal definitions in mind, incidences of child and early marriage amounting to slavery will be discerned by looking primarily at: the ability of the spouse to refuse the marriage or leave the union should the situation prove unsustainable; the levels of control or exploitation exercised within the marriage itself; and the inability of the child spouse to seek redress through either law or society. In determining whether an incident of child and early marriage amounts to forced labour, it should be noted whether any work or service is exacted from the spouse under the threat of any penalty, including violence, economic threats, the loss of rights or privileges and subtler psychological pressure.<sup>18</sup> Incidences of child and early marriage amounting to

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<sup>16</sup> For example, the kidnapping of girls in Nigeria, many of whom are subsequently forced to marry militants and are sexually abused, see: Human Rights Watch, *Those Terrible Weeks in their Camp*, 27 October 2014, [http://features.hrw.org/features/HRW\\_2014\\_report/Those\\_Terrible\\_Weeks\\_in\\_Their\\_Camp/index.html](http://features.hrw.org/features/HRW_2014_report/Those_Terrible_Weeks_in_Their_Camp/index.html); “Boko Haram abductees tell of forced marriage, rape, torture and abuse”, *The Guardian*, 27 October 2014 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/27/boko-haram-forced-marriage-rape-torture-abuse-hrw-report>.

<sup>17</sup> Anti-Slavery International, Association Timidria and the Department for International Development (DFID), *La Wahaya: L’esclavage domestique et sexuel au Niger*, The case of Tikirit Amoudar, 45 years old, pp. 21-22.

<sup>18</sup> ILO, *Supra.*, n. 11, p. 5.

child trafficking should be identified as such if the child concerned has been recruited, transported, harboured or received by any means for the purpose of exploitation.<sup>19</sup>

In cases of child and early marriage, the decision to marry is often taken by one or both parents or guardians, as is illustrated in the following case documented by Timidria:

*“My name is Maighisse Yacine, I’m 13 years-old and I’m a fourth grade student at the community school of Tanguezatane. I like going to school. One day, my mother informed me that I should marry a cousin of mine. I cried a lot because I didn’t want to leave school but my parents threatened to beat me if I refused. Fortunately, the president of the children’s council found out and informed the chief of the village who then contacted the director and the school coordinator...the marriage was off and [...] I could continue to go to school. When I learned the good news I cried with joy.”<sup>20</sup>*

Maighisse’s experience is representative of child and early marriages in which the ability of the child spouse to refuse the marriage is absent. Had Maighisse’s marriage not been prevented by a third party, she would have found herself in a situation in which freedom of choice was negated and the powers attaching to the right of ownership were exercised over her, thereby deeming her a victim of slavery.

In cases in which the marriage goes ahead, many spouses find that upon entering a new household they have little or no bargaining power with their spouse and/or in-laws regarding their own movements or belongings. Choices from earning an independent income to consent to sexual relations may not be available. For example, a report by Human Rights Watch in which 135 girls and women in Tanzania were interviewed regarding child marriage and violence against women and girls, found that many female spouses were controlled through violence or threats of violence from their husbands, were forced to perform domestic and child-rearing duties and had their freedom of movement restricted by their husbands.<sup>21</sup> Other girls spoke of being prevented from contacting relatives, leaving the house or seeking employment.<sup>22</sup> These incidences are illustrative of the high levels of control or exploitation that can be exercised in child and early marriages, which is indicative of slavery. Furthermore, the finding by Human Rights Watch that many female spouses surveyed were forced to perform domestic and child-rearing duties and were controlled by violence or threats of violence strongly suggests that such incidences should be deemed forced labour. Cases in which children are transferred to another home, even if it is in the same town or village, and they are subsequently exploited in their new home, amount to child trafficking.

Human Rights Watch reported that some Tanzanian girls who suffered physical and other abuse attempted to escape to their own families but were often forced to return to their husbands and were told that all married women must tolerate abuse.<sup>23</sup> The story of Nilab from Afghanistan is illustrative of this issue. Nilab grew up with her grandparents and aunts and at 13 was married to a man who was already married with three children. Nilab

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<sup>19</sup> Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking, *Supra.*, n. 13, Article 3 (c).

<sup>20</sup> Interview by Aminatou Galissoune, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at Timidria, August 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Human Rights Watch, *No Way Out: Child Marriage and Human Rights Abuses in Tanzania*, October 2014, p. 54.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

describes thinking that the wedding party was just childhood play and not understanding what it meant to be someone's life partner. From the first day of Nilab's marriage, her husband and in-laws wanted her to become a prostitute. When Nilab attempted to escape her in-laws' house to her grandparents, they forced her to return to her in-laws' house.<sup>24</sup> This kind of control and exploitation exercised within marriage, coupled with the inability of the child spouse to leave or end the marriage, are key criteria in assessing whether a situation amounts to slavery.<sup>25</sup>

Anti-Slavery International's partner organisation Kivulini has highlighted how poverty drives child and early marriage in Tanzania and in many cases daughters are married as children so that their families can obtain a bride price.<sup>26</sup> Although not all marriages involving a transaction such as a bride price automatically equate to slavery or slavery-like practices, the existence of a bride price can put further pressure on an individual to stay in marriage whatever the circumstances because his or her family may be unable or unwilling to repay the bride price received.

The story of a 10 year old girl from Romania demonstrates how a marriage or union that is negotiated according to payments or transactions of any sort, particularly by the couple's parents, risks a sense of 'value' and 'ownership' being placed on the bride (or groom). The girl was sold by her parents to be 'married' to a 17 year-old boy with a contract specifying that she bear two children. The girl gave birth at the age of 12, and was warned by a doctor not to have any more children because of the risk to her health. This led the boy's parents to try to reclaim the money they paid for 'breach of contract'.<sup>27</sup> 'Commoditising' a person through payment of a *bride price* in either cash or kind can bestow a sense of ownership in those involved, instilling in the dominant party a feeling of licence over the other person, for example, to commit violence and use brutality towards them in marriage.

As such, while the existence of a transaction such as a bride price is not a clear criteria for slavery or slavery-like practices, it can be considered to be an indicator that exploitative practices may subsequently arise in a marriage. Moreover, the transfer of a child by any means, including the giving or receiving of payments or benefits, meets the definition of trafficking as per article 3 of the Palermo protocol. Importantly, in the case of under-18s, the handing over of the child to a third party that subsequently exploits the child amounts to trafficking regardless of whether the child gives "consent".

#### IV. Conclusion

Anti-Slavery International research has found that the levels of abuse, exploitation and control experienced by children as a result of child and early marriage can often meet

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<sup>24</sup> Breakthrough: Nation Against Early Marriage, *For Nilab, Forced to Marry at Thirteen*, <http://www.breakthrough.tv/earlymarriage/2013/10/nilab-forced-marry-thirteen/>.

<sup>25</sup> Anti-Slavery International, *Supra.*, n. 15, p. 18.

<sup>26</sup> Kivulini Women's Rights Organisation, *Rhobi Matiko tells her story*, August 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZAqqlz5Tg>; Kivulini Women's Rights Organisation, *Helena Kaitira tells her story*, August 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JvvHHt8kKo>.

<sup>27</sup> ERRC, "Forced Arranged Marriage of Minors among Traditional Romani Communities in Europe", *Submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons*, (15 November 2006, p. 5-6; Anti-Slavery International, *Out of the Shadows: Child Marriage and Slavery*, April 2013, p. 24.

international legal definitions of slavery and slavery-like practices, such as forced labour and trafficking.<sup>28</sup>

It is not contested that when children and women are sold or abducted to become “wives”, the “marriage” clearly amounts to slavery as the perpetrator seeks to exercise powers of ownership over the victim. However, the exercise of ownership can be less spectacular than that associated with abduction and selling, though no less real, as the examples of child and early marriage above demonstrate. Hence, Anti-Slavery International argues that child and early marriage can be qualified as **slavery** in accordance with the 1926 Convention definition if one or more of the following indicators are present:

- When the ability to refuse, leave or end a marriage is denied, thereby fundamentally compromising the child’s freedom of movement and right to liberty and security of person;
- When the conditions of marriage mean that a child spouse is exploited or denied freedom of choice by either their spouse or in-laws regarding any individual and personal matter from learning and attending school, to earning an independent income, to consent to sexual relations and/or is intimidated into working longer hours than his or her spouse or in-laws through threats of violence, divorce or the withholding of food or money;
- When a child spouse is subject to rape, beatings or murder without recourse to law or society for protection or redress.

In addition, Anti-Slavery International proposes that instances of child and early marriage in which child spouses are compelled to undertake work or service under the menace of any penalty and for which they have not offered themselves voluntarily should be considered **forced labour**.

With regards to international standards of protection, an examination of ILO reasoning reveals that the ILO includes forced marriage in its forced labour estimates if the marriage leads to a situation of forced labour or service:

*“[t]he figures do not include trafficking for... forced marriage/adoption unless the latter practices lead to a situation of forced labour or service”<sup>29</sup>*

Bearing in mind the above examples demonstrating incidences of forced labour occurring within child and early marriage, Anti-Slavery International argues that as with forced marriage, certain cases of child and early marriage should also be included in the ILO’s estimates for forced labour.

Cases of child and early marriage in which the child is moved from one place to another for the purposes of exploitation, sexual or otherwise, constitute **child trafficking**. Interestingly, the ILO has expressly qualified the trafficking of children for sexual exploitation as forced labour.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Anti-Slavery International, *Supra.*, n. 15, p. 43.

<sup>29</sup> ILO, *ILO Global Estimate of Forced Labour, Results and Methodology*, 2012, p. 13, footnote 2.

<sup>30</sup> ILO, *Supra.*, n. 11, p. 9, para. 35; and p. 44-45, para. 213.



Finally, an examination of the ILO definition of child labour in Convention 182 reveals that the ILO defines the worst forms of child labour as including incidences of slavery, trafficking in children and forced or compulsory labour:

*“All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.”<sup>31</sup>*

As such, where child and early marriage is deemed slavery, forced labour or trafficking, it should also be considered child labour as per the ILO’s own definition of the worst forms of child labour and should be comprehensively addressed by the ILO on the grounds that it falls within the organisation’s purview under ILO Convention 182. The UN should also intensify efforts to combat situations of slavery arising from child and early marriage, which violate the 1926 Convention, the 1956 Supplementary Convention and the Palermo Protocol.

## **V. Recommendations**

In light of the above, Anti-Slavery International calls for the following:

- In their next resolutions on child, early and forced marriage, the Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly should explicitly recognise the complex and overlapping causes and consequences of child, early and forced marriage, including its links to slavery and should offer a reaffirmation and clarification of the relevant frameworks relating both to slavery and right to marry safeguards;
- The UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council should develop a Strategic Action Plan on Child and Early Marriage with cross-international agency participation, to accelerate the end of child and early marriage world-wide in practice. To this end, States must be encouraged and assisted in addressing child, early and forced marriage in a holistic and comprehensive manner by mobilising all sectors of society, including the education, health and law enforcement sectors. Programmes must be developed to equip young people with training, skills, information, safe places, shelters, support networks and counselling in order to combat child, early and forced marriage;
- The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals must ensure that the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals include a target to end child, early and forced marriage;
- The UN Human Rights Council should encourage better adherence in national law to the international slavery framework and right to marry safeguards, including their enforcement, as they relate to forced and child marriage by all UN Member States through the Universal Periodic Review process;
- In examining State compliance with relevant ILO Conventions, including Convention 29 and Convention 182, the ILO should assess whether cases of child and early marriage

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<sup>31</sup> ILO Convention 182, Article 3 (a).

amount to slavery, forced labour and/or trafficking and explicitly recognise that forced marriage, in particular forced child and early marriage, constitute child labour. Such assessments are particularly encouraged from the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations and the ILO Conference Committee on the Application of Standards;

- The ILO should pay closer attention to the links between child and early marriage and slavery and recognise explicitly that forced child and early marriage constitute slavery. The ILO should recognise the relevance of such qualifications to its mandate and should instruct ILO country offices, regional offices and Headquarters to address incidences of child and early marriage as potential forms of child labour.

Anti-Slavery International further call upon States to:

- Ratify all relevant international standards relating to slavery, slavery-like practices and the right to marry, including the 1926 Slavery and 1956 Supplementary Conventions, the Palermo Protocol, the ILO Conventions 29 and 182, the 1964 Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriage and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Remove all reservations seriously undermining the object and purpose of relevant treaties;
- Align national law, including religious, customary or local laws, on marriage and slavery with international legal standards. States must ensure that relevant authorities, including religious or tribal authorities, comply with international legal standards;
- Facilitate free and full consent to marriage by both parties by insisting that every marriage is accompanied by a public statement from the religious or administrative official conducting the marriage which establishes that the union has been entered into on the basis of informed consent. There must a mechanism in place by which any spouse can challenge the authenticity of such a statement in the event that the religious or administrative official is corrupt;
- Enact, enforce and uphold laws establishing a minimum age for marriage at 18 years old. In cases in which this age limit has not yet been implemented, the authorities should develop mechanisms by which they can investigate marriages that take place below this age limit and establish whether situations of slavery or slavery-like practices are present;
- Provide access to appropriate remedies and support for children or adults entering into or wishing to leave both registered marriages and unregistered unions;
- Ensure that no amendment of the legal minimum age for marriage is used to restrict advice or services regarding sexual or reproductive health for any person under that age;
- Raise awareness of the links between slavery and child, early and forced marriage, as well as the relevant applicable laws;

- Ensure awareness of and access to advice, protection and rehabilitation for all children (and adults) trapped in slavery through marriage and financial and other support for those who escape marriage amounting to slavery.