**Call for inputs to inform the report by the UN Secretary-General on progress towards ending child, early and forced marriage worldwide**

**Inputs from Soroptimist International**

**April 2024**

Source: A/HRC/RES/53/23 Child, early and forced marriage: ending and preventing forced marriage 2023

While there has been progress in ending child, early and forced marriage, the UN has recently expressed deep concern that progress has been uneven across regions with millions of people still living in situations of forced marriage and that it is estimated that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic which has already reduced the number of averted child marriages since 2020 by one quarter now has data that show that, at the current pace of progress, target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which includes ending the practice by 2030, will not be met in any region of the world.**[[1]](#footnote-1)**

The disparate impact of poverty, global economic crises, austerity measures, climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, conflict and natural hazards on women’s and girls’ human rights, have exacerbated existing structural inequalities, the feminization of poverty, discriminatory social norms, practices and gender stereotypes and the lack of inclusive and equitable quality education are all among the drivers of forced marriage of women and girls particularly in rural areas, conflict, humanitarian settings or among the poorest communities .[[2]](#footnote-2)

Soroptimist International shares the UN’s concernthat child, early and forced marriage disproportionately affects girls and young women with little or no formal education and is itself a significant obstacle to educational opportunities for girls and young women, in particular girls who are forced to drop out of school owing to marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, childcare responsibilities, stigma relating to menstruation or social and gender norms confining married women and girls to the home. As a result, the subsequent low levels of education among girls limit their ability to achieve gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment, women’s formal employment and economic opportunities and the active participation and leadership of women and girls in economic, social and cultural development, governance and decision-making as well as enables the perpetuation of their stereotyped and restricted roles in families and communities,

**Question 1(a) Address the root causes of child, early and forced marriage including social norms, gender inequalities and stereotypes:**

By Soroptimist International ensuring educational opportunities, as well as equal access to inclusive and equitable quality education which educates girls about consent and respecting boundaries, we are engaging in some of the most effective ways to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage. Soroptimist International believes that by providing an inclusive and equitable quality education, we can address the root causes of gender inequality in such a way that it leads to their elimination, including structural, institutional, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against women and girls, patriarchal values and structures, discriminatory social norms, gender stereotypes, perceptions, customs, attitudes and behaviours and the socioeconomic drivers of violence and unequal power relations all of which perpetuate forced marriage.[[3]](#footnote-3) Equal access to inclusive and equitable quality education also enables women and girls to achieve gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment, women’s formal employment and economic opportunities and the active participation and leadership of women and girls in economic, social and cultural development, governance and decision-making. [[4]](#footnote-4)

**Question 1(b)**: **Provide information on measures to ensure access to education, decent work, social protection, health services, including sexual and reproductive health, for girls and women who are affected or at risk, who are already married or in informal unions, who have fled such a marriage or union, whose marriage has dissolved, and widowed girls or women who were married as girls:**

Soroptimists try to ensure access to inclusive and equitable quality education to women and girls, including adolescent girls, who are affected or at risk, or who are already married or in informal unions, have fled such a marriage or union, whose marriage has dissolved or widowed girls or women who were married as girls. In addition, Soroptimists also try to ensure access to inclusive and equitable quality education to women and girls, including adolescent girls during humanitarian emergencies as well as in situations of forced displacement, armed conflict, natural hazard and public health emergencies. Soroptimist International’s efforts also include strengthening follow-up and interventions to prevent and eliminate forced marriage in humanitarian settings and to address the needs of those affected.[[5]](#footnote-5)

1. A/HRC/RES/53/23 Child, early and forced marriage: ending and preventing forced marriage 2023

   Preamble

   <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g23/150/23/pdf/g2315023.pdf?token=qXMxdjpCl4Ob9K2cPT&fe=true> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A/HRC/RES/53/23 Child, early and forced marriage: ending and preventing forced marriage 2023

   Preamble

   <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g23/150/23/pdf/g2315023.pdf?token=qXMxdjpCl4Ob9K2cPT&fe=true> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A/HRC/RES/53/23 Child, early and forced marriage: ending and preventing forced marriage 2023

   Preamble

   <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g23/150/23/pdf/g2315023.pdf?token=qXMxdjpCl4Ob9K2cPT&fe=true> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. A/HRC/RES/53/23 Child, early and forced marriage: ending and preventing forced marriage 2023

   Preamble

   <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g23/150/23/pdf/g2315023.pdf?token=qXMxdjpCl4Ob9K2cPT&fe=true> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. A/HRC/RES/53/23 Child, early and forced marriage: ending and preventing forced marriage 2023

   Para 1(h)

   <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g23/150/23/pdf/g2315023.pdf?token=qXMxdjpCl4Ob9K2cPT&fe=true> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)