



Ref. No:413- 2623

2 May 2024

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and regarding the report on progress towards ending child, early and forced marriage, would like to refer to the letter received regarding the call for inputs on **“progress towards ending child, early and forced marriage”**. In that regard, the Permanent Mission has the honor to attach herewith contribution of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the aforementioned request.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, including its causes and consequences, the assurance of its highest consideration.





Report by the Secretary-General on progress towards ending child, early and forced marriage worldwide

The concept of marriage in the Kingdom consists of a contract with pillars and conditions that arranges rights and duties between spouses (man and woman) to achieve goals, including the establishment of a stable family cared for by the spouses with affection and mercy. The Kingdom gives great care and attention to the family in all its components, including raising awareness of its issues and rights. Article (9) of the Basic Law of Governance included that the basis unit of the Saudi society is the family; its members shall be brought up on the basis of Islamic creed, and Article (10) of the same law included that State shall endeavor to strengthen family bonds and maintain its Islamic values.

- 1) What efforts have been made or are planned to address the recommendations of the latest report of the secretary-General on the issue of child, early and forced marriage?
 - a) Address the root causes of child, early and forced marriage including social norms, gender inequalities and stereotypes;



- b) 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;
- c) Guarantee protection measures, remedies and support services for victims;
- d) Implement child and gender-responsive budgeting to support effective measures to eradicate child, early and forced marriages.

The Child Protection Law was issued pursuant to Royal Decree No. (M/14) dated 2/3/1436 AH, which aims to protect the child from all forms of abuse and neglect that he/she may be exposed to in the environment surrounding them (home, school, neighborhood, public places, or homes). Care and education, alternative families, governmental and private institutions), whether this occurs from a person who has guardianship, authority, or responsibility over the child, or who has a relationship with the child in any way, or from anyone else.

Among the Human resources and social development efforts is to develop systems and regulations in line with state regulations and international agreements. An integrated package of services has been developed to cover the needs of victims during and after domestic violence. The Ministry works on social awareness through media campaigns and activating international days with



the aim of spreading awareness in Saudi society about violence and human rights. The Domestic Violence Report Center has also been established, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week to receive reports of domestic violence and child protection.

2) What prevention mechanisms have proved effective to eradicate child, early and forced marriage? Please include examples of promising practices and challenges enforced on engaging family members, religious, traditional and community leaders, in raising awareness about, and countering child, early and forced marriage.

The Personal Status Law has introduced a minimum age of 18 years, it prohibits the documentation of any marriage contract for those under this age, and as an exception, the system allows the court to authorize the marriage of those under the age of (18) years according to controls and conditions that ensure that no harm is caused to applicants for marriage.

3) What kind of approaches and tools have been used to collect disaggregated data on child, early and forced marriages, as well as informal unions?

Data is collected through the General Authority of Statistics with the assistants of Ministry of Justice (number of marriage contracts, divorce, age, region)

4) Have digital technologies and tools been used to address child, early and forced marriage? If so, please share promising practices, challenges and possible solutions.



Yes, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is advanced in using artificial intelligence and digital tools to prevent any practice related to early or forced marriage. The marriage contract is done through an electronic service (Najez Portal

- affiliated with the Ministry of Justice), and one of its tasks is to document marriage contracts for those who have reached the legal age. As for those who have not reached the legal age of (18) years, they cannot complete their marriage through the system because they did not meet the conditions for marriage based on what is stated in Article (9) of the Personal Status Law prohibiting the documentation of any marriage contracts for those under the age of (18). Even though the Early Marriage Approval service that allows a request for permission for a marriage contract for a person under the age of eighteen, male or female is available through the portal, it has to go through a long and detailed process and several reports are requested such as a medical report to prove physical and mental completeness, and a psychological and social report to prove parity between the young man and the girl which makes it very difficult to obtain . Also, Article (13) of the Personal Status Law stipulates that the women's consent is one of the conditions for the marriage contract, and that the guardian may not prevent her from marrying someone with whom she consents. If she is prevented from doing so, the



competent court shall marry her in accordance with Article (20) of the Personal Status Law.

- 5) Are digitalized birth and marriage registration systems being used in your country, requiring mandatory registration of all births and marriages, including childbirths at home and marriages under customary and religious laws? Do these digitalized registration systems allow to verify digitally birth certificates, before registering any marriage?

Yes, there are digitalized birth and marriage registration systems that requires mandatory registration for all births and marriages including childbirths at home and marriages under customary and religious laws.

And premarital screening program has a digitalized system that verifies the birth date before any registration.

- 6) What other innovative strategies have been used to address child, early and forced marriage, as well as informal unions and collect data on this practice in your country?

The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development works on social awareness through media campaigns and activating international days with the aim of spreading awareness in Saudi society about violence and human rights. The Domestic Violence Report Center has also been established, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week to receive reports of domestic violence and child protection.