

Ambassador of Sierra Leone
Yvette Stevens

INTRODUCTION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION L34

Strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage: challenges, achievements, best practices and implementation gaps

Mr. President,

It is with great pleasure that Sierra Leone presents the draft Resolution on: "Strengthening Efforts to Prevent and Eliminate Child, Early and Forced Marriage: Challenges, Achievements, Best Practices and Implementation Gaps" on behalf of the core group (comprising: Argentina, Canada, Ethiopia, Finland, Honduras, Italy, the Maldives, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Poland, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, and Uruguay), and over 100 co-sponsors, for consideration by the Human Rights Council.

Mr. President,

The practice of child, early and forced marriage is widespread and occurs in all regions of the world. It constitutes a violation of human rights, in that it prevents individuals from living their lives free from all forms of violence and that it has adverse consequences on the enjoyment of human rights, such as the right to education, the right to the highest attainable standard of health. A number of countries have recognized the existence of this problem and some have even passed legislation to ban child early and forced marriages, but the practice still persists. Some of the reasons that have been identified include poverty, gender inequality and traditional practices.

Mr. President,

It is clear that efforts need to be strengthened to address this breach of human rights of some of the most vulnerable groups in society and this draft resolution seeks to initiate action in this regard. This is a procedural resolution through which this Council decides to convene a panel discussion at its 26th Session on strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage, including challenges, achievements, best practices and implementation gaps. It requests the OHCHR to prepare a report and to make it available to states prior to the panel discussion, in order to inform states' engagement in the panel. It also requests the OHCHR to prepare a summary report of the panel discussion. By adopting this Resolution, the Council will express its support for international efforts aimed at the prevention and elimination of child, early and forced marriage.

Mr. President,

The process of drawing up this draft resolution has been most inclusive. Two well-attended open informal negotiations were held, on the basis of which, the core group was able to strengthen the contents of the draft resolution.

Mr President,

I would now like to draw attention to the following oral revisions:

A preambular paragraph (PP6bis), adds poverty and lack of education as among the causes of the practice and will read:

“Deeply concerned that poverty and lack of education are also among the causes of child, early and forced marriage.”

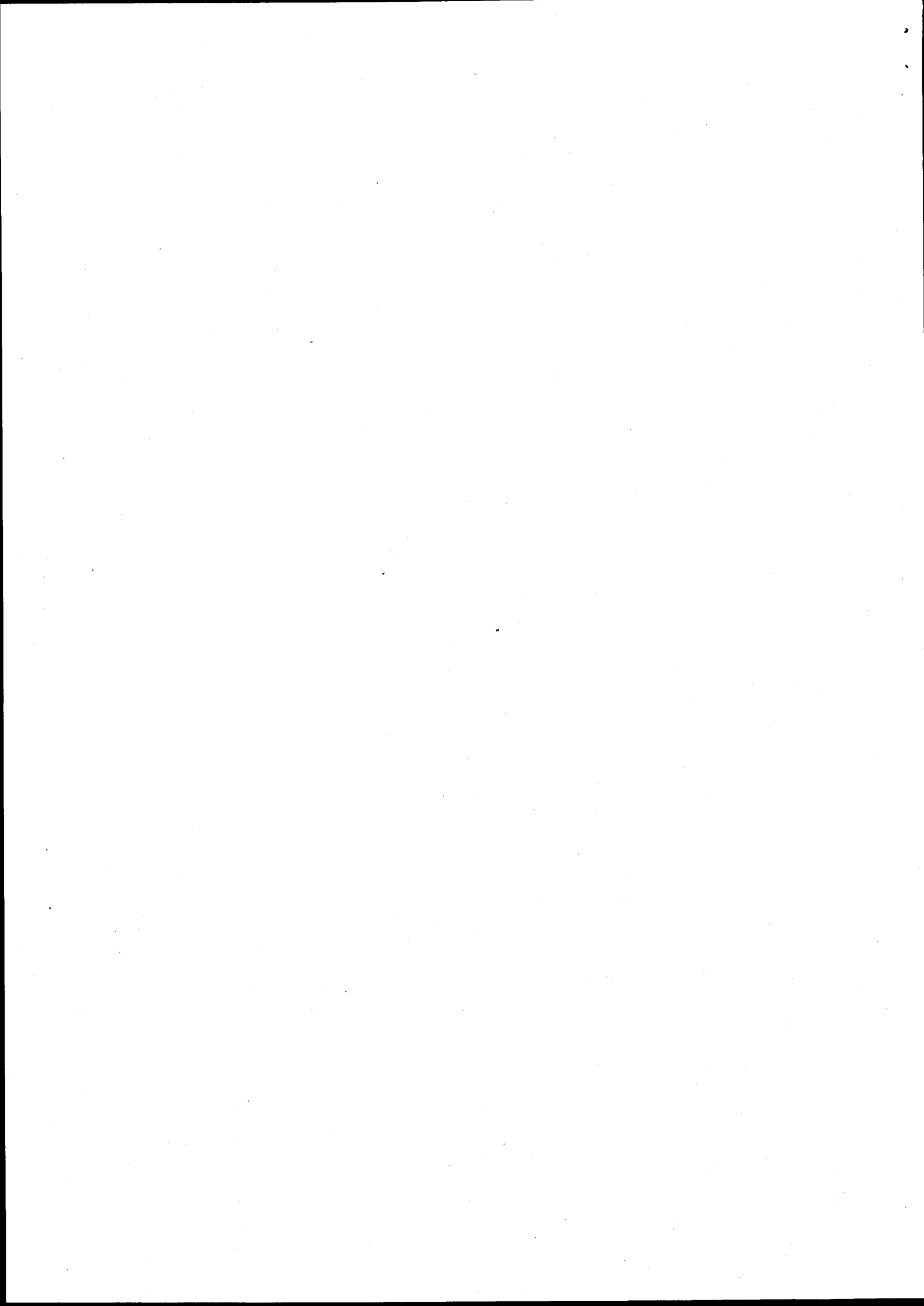
In Operative Paragraph 1 (OP1), I would like to draw attention to the oral amendment to add the word “bodies” before “agencies, funds and programmes”. This aligns with standard language and ensures an inclusive engagement of all United Nations entities. The same amendment applies to OP2.

Mr. President,

The large and cross-regional core group and the co-sponsors, underscores the strength of our shared concern for action on this issue. The number of young lives affected by this practice and the impact on their lives is shocking. 14 million girls are married too early every year. This issue therefore deserves the attention of this Council, and we call upon the Council to adopt this resolution by consensus.

Mr. President,

I thank you.



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