



Ambassador Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations
Ambassador Csaba Kőrösi, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations
Co-Chairs of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

London, 4 July 2014

Re: Open letter regarding the target on child, early and forced marriage

Your Excellencies,

We, the undersigned organisations, write to you as members of *Girls Not Brides: The Global Partnership to End Child Marriage*. **We urge you and the members of the Open Working Group to maintain ending child, early and forced marriage as a separate target under Goal 5 (gender equality, empower women and girls everywhere).** We welcome the revised zero draft of proposed goals and targets, however, we urge that target 5.3 be strengthened to reflect the explicit need to end child, early and forced marriage, by stating “eliminate all harmful practices, *especially* child, early and forced marriage”.

It has come to our attention that there have been efforts to subsume child, early and forced marriage under a target of ending violence against women. The causes of child, early and forced marriage are complex and systemic—ranging from gender inequality and poverty to customary practices. Subsuming this target under a target on violence against women risks masking the complex nature of this practice and the comprehensive strategies required to address it. Child, early and forced marriage is indeed a form of violence, and it is good to see that the international community is acknowledging this point. However, it is also a development and rights challenge that robs 14 million girls a year of their future and holds them – and their countries – back from achieving their potential.

Child, early and forced marriage has impeded the achievement of 6 of the 8 current Millennium Development Goals. It is impossible to reduce the numbers of women and children dying in childbirth and infancy if girls as young as 9 are marrying and having children when they are still children themselves. Girls who are married and out of school will not be able to contribute to their countries’ economic development and prosperity, perpetuating cycles of poverty. In fact, a recent study conducted by UNICEF in Nepal found that the economic cost of just the loss of schooling due to child, early and forced marriage was 3.87% of GDP.

A stand-alone target on child, early and forced marriage is not only important to reducing violence against women and girls, but it will also spur progress toward a whole range of associated health, economic and educational goals. For example, there are strong correlations between rates of child, early and forced marriage and levels of education for girls (over 60% of child brides in developing countries have had no formal education). By addressing child, early and forced marriage, efforts to improve education will be accelerated because it requires a deep look at the barriers to girls’ schooling.

Ending child, early and forced marriage is a concrete and measurable target that will contribute significantly to the achievement of gender equality while also accelerating efforts to achieve a safe, healthy and prosperous future for all.

We strongly encourage you and the members of the Open Working Group to maintain a stand-alone target to end child, early and forced marriage under proposed Goal 5.

Yours sincerely,

Aamaa Milan Kendra (AMK), Nepal	BHORE, Nepal
Action for Community Development, Uganda	Blue Veins, Pakistan
ActionAid International	CARE Ethiopia, Ethiopia
ADERE, Senegal	CARE International
Afghan Women Skills Development Center, Afghanistan	Center for Reproductive Rights
Aid Afghanistan for Education, Afghanistan	Centre for Girls and Interaction, Malawi
Alliances for Africa, Nigeria	Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, South Africa
Amani Initiative, Uganda	Child Aid Uganda, Uganda
American Jewish World Service (AJWS)	ChildHelp Inc. Liberia, Liberia
Amref Health Africa	Children and Women Trust, Pakistan
Association Malienne Pour la Survie au Sahel, Mali	Children's Dignity Forum (CDF), Tanzania
Anglican Children's Programme, Zambia	CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality, The Netherlands
Aschiana, Afghanistan	Civil Society and Human Rights Network (CSHRN), Afghanistan
Association Camerounaise des Femmes Juristes, Cameroon	Civil Society Forum for Child Rights in Mozambique (ROSC), Mozambique
Association D'appui et d'Eveil Pugsada (ADEP), Burkina Faso	Cooperation for Peace and Development (CPD), Afghanistan
Association de Lutte Contre les Violences Faites aux Femmes, Cameroon	Coordination nationale des associations des jeunes pour la lutte contre le Sida, Chad
Association Maïa, Burkina Faso	CULP - Centre for Unfolding Learning Potentials, India
Association Malienne Pour la Survie au Sahel, Mali	Defence for Children International Sierra Leone (DCI - SL), Sierra Leone
Association pour la Promotion du Genre et Développement Humain Durable, Cameroon	Democratic Commission for Human Development, Pakistan
Association Tchadienne pour le Bien Etre Familial, Chad	Development Institutions Network- DIN, Pakistan
AWAZ Foundation Pakistan: Centre for Development Services, Pakistan	

Educate the Children, USA/Nepal	Independent Yemen Group, UK
Empower People, India	Institute of Health Management Pachod (IHMP), India
Empowerment and Development Centre for Africa (EDCA Cameroon), Cameroon	Instituto Promundo, Brazil
Equality Now	Integrated Development Africa Programme (IDAP), Kenya
Equilibres & Populations, France	Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices, Ethiopia
Expanding Lives, USA	Inter-Confessional AIDS Network, Cameroon
Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Gambia	International Center for Research on Women
FORWARD- Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development, UK	International Children's Center, Turkey
Foundation for Youth Empowerment, Malawi	International HIV/AIDS Alliance
Free the Slaves	International Women's Health Coalition
G(irls)20, Canada	Iranian & Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO), UK
Girl Child Concerns, Nigeria	Iraqi Al-Amal Association, Iraq
Girl Rising, USA	Isa Wali Empowerment Initiative, Nigeria
God Cares Orphan Organisation, Malawi	Jaag Welfare Movement, Pakistan
Grandmother Project, Italy	JAGRITI Trust, India
Grassroots Health Organization of Nigeria (GHON), Nigeria	Joy for Children, Uganda
GreeneWorks, USA	Kaana Foundation for Outreach Programs (KAFOP), Uganda
Halliru Youth Development and Empowerment Initiative (AYDI), Nigeria	Kalinga Kusum Foundation, India
HAQ: Centre for Child Rights, India	Kehkashan Development Organization (KDO), Pakistan
Her Turn, Nepal	Kiota for Women's Health and Development (KIWOHEDE), Tanzania
Human Dignity Foundation	Association LEAD TCHAD, Chad
Human Rights Movement: "Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan", Kyrgyzstan	

Light Ethiopia, Ethiopia

Luchenza Youth Organisation, Malawi

Mamta Health Institute for Mother and Child, India

Men's Resources International, USA

National Council of Jewish Women, Inc, USA

National Integrated Development Association (NIDA-Pakistan), Pakistan

NGO PARASTOR, Tajikistan

Nkumu Fed-Fed, Cameroon

One By One, USA

ONG Génération Femme du Troisième Millénaire, Cote d'Ivoire

Voix de Femmes, Burkina Faso

Organisation for Public Interest (OPI), Pakistan

Organisation of African Youth, South Africa

Pathfinder International

Peace Foundation, Pakistan

Plan International

Population Action International

Population Matters, UK

Population Media Center, Inc., USA

Programme Intégré de Santé de Reproduction et Familial -PISRF, Democratic Republic of Congo

Promundo-US, USA

Protect and Save the Children, Malaysia

Public Association Women's League of Creative Initiative, Kazakhstan

Red Cross Helpline About Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation, Norway

RESAEC (Réseau des animateurs pour l'Education des Communautés), Cameroon

Roma Destiny, Bulgaria

Saare Tabitha, Cameroon

Safe Society, India

Samrakshak Samuha Nepal (SASANE), Nepal

Save the Children, India

School Girls Unite, USA

Seeds to Sew International LLC

Service for Peace Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone

SFBLSP_Burundi, Burundi

Shariatpur Development Society (SDS), Bangladesh

Shohratgarh Environmental Society, India

Sujag Sansar Organization, Pakistan

Association des Femmes Africaines Face au SIDA (SWAA) Niger, Niger

Terre des Femmes - Human Rights for Women, Germany

The Awakening, Pakistan

The Coexist Initiative, Kenya

The Hunger Project, USA

The Red Elephant Foundation, India

The Wellbeing Foundation, Nigeria

Tostan

U.S. Fund for UNICEF, USA

U.S. National Committee for UN Women, USA

Unchained At Last, USA

URMUL Trust, India

Vikalp Sansthan, India

Vital Voices Global Partnership

Voice of Grace Foundation, Cameroon

Women and Law in Southern Africa Research
and Education Trust (WLSA), Zambia

Women in Alternative Action - WAA, Cameroon

Women United for Economic Empowerment,
Nigeria

Women Win, The Netherlands

Women Power Connect, India

Women's Initiative for Self-Actualization (WISA),
Nigeria

Your Hope Is Remaining Trust, India

Youth Association for Development (YAD),
Pakistan

Youth Harvest Foundation Ghana, Ghana

Youth Net and Counselling - YONECO, Malawi

Youth Partnership, Uganda

Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association,
Zimbabwe