



Parliamentarians for Global Action
Acción Mundial de Parlamentarios
Action Mondiale des Parlementaires

Parliamentary Seminar on Combating Child, Early and Forced Marriage

March 3-4, 2014
Accra, Ghana

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Noting the call in Resolution 24 entitled “Strengthening efforts to prevent and eliminate child, early and forced marriage: challenges, achievements, best practices and implementation gaps” adopted by the Human Rights Council on 25 September 2013,

Guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), as well as other relevant human rights instruments, including the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child (1999), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (1998), and the African Youth Charter (2006),

Deeply concerned that the practices of child, early and forced marriage are widespread and constitute violations of human rights, prevent individuals from living their lives free from all forms of violence and that have adverse consequences on the enjoyment of human rights, such as the right to education, the right to the highest attainable standard of health, including sexual and reproductive health,

Recognizing that child, early and forced marriage continues to be an impediment not only to the economic, legal, health and social status of women and girls but also to the development of the community and the country as a whole, and that the empowerment of and investment in women and girls, as well as their meaningful participation in decisions that affect them, is a key factor in breaking the cycle of gender inequality and discrimination, violence and poverty and is critical for sustainable development and economic growth,

Mindful of our responsibilities as Parliamentarians to represent, protect and empower, to the best of our abilities, every individual in our countries,

We, Participating Members of Parliament in PGA’s Parliamentary Seminar on Combating Child, Early and Forced Marriage, held on 3-4 March, 2014 in Accra, Ghana commit to undertake the following actions:

1. As leaders, use our platform and visibility:

a) In our constituencies and with our colleagues in Parliament to spread awareness of the value of the girl child, the importance of keeping girls in school, and of alternatives to child, early and forced marriage that benefit the child, the community and the country. We will work closely with civil society, private sector and the media, and encourage public dialogue with religious and traditional leaders and other stakeholders to address the root causes of child, early and forced marriage.

b) To call on Governments to adopt gender-responsive budgeting in addressing child, early and forced marriage, towards progressively increasing budget allocations.

2. As lawmakers, propose, amend and/or adopt legislation to effectively reduce the prevalence of child, early and forced marriage in our countries, including provisions to protect girls under customary and religious laws.



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Legislation may include establishing a coordinating agency with a mandate for child rights and protection. The agency should have technical expertise, undertake periodic data collection, as well as monitoring and evaluation of government interventions to better formulate policies and assure accountability.

3. In our oversight capacity, ensure that legislation prohibiting early and forced marriage is being properly implemented and enforced by:

a) Requesting relevant Ministries and agencies to present to Parliament reports on challenges, achievements, best practices and implementation gaps in preventing and eliminating child, early and forced marriage, in support of Resolution 24 by the Human Rights Council on Child, Early and Forced Marriage (September 2013); and

b) Monitoring and evaluating budget allocations to Ministries and Departments with a mandate of addressing child protection issues, including child, early and forced marriage; and for programs that empower girls through education and skills acquisition, leadership development, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS prevention. In addition, support advocacy and community-based projects to address the root causes of child, early and forced marriage, including efforts to engage perpetrators, men and traditional and religious leaders.

4. Report to the PGA Secretariat, within three months, on steps and actions taken pursuant to this Statement of Commitment.

Done this 4th day of March 2014 in Accra, Ghana