DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF GHANA’S NATIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

SEMINAR FOR AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARIANS ON ENDING CEFM
ACCRA, GHANA
2ND MARCH, 2016
Child marriage refers to any marriage of a child younger than 18 years old, in accordance with Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

While child marriage can happen to both sexes, it disproportionately affects girls.
### Data on Child Marriage in Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>DHS 2014</th>
<th>National Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brong Ahafo</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**DHS 2014 (20-49 married/union by age 18)**

- Northern: 39.6%
- Upper West: 37.3%
- Upper East: 36.1%
- Western: 32.9%
- Central: 29.5%
- Eastern: 27.5%
- Ashanti: 25.9%
- Volta: 25.9%
- Brong Ahafo: 23.9%
- Greater Accra: 18.5%

**National Average: 27.2%**
In 4 women (27%) between ages 20 – 49 years were married/in union before age 18 in 2011 (MICS 2011).

1 out of 5 girls (21%) between ages of 20-24 will be married before their 18th birthday.

The likelihood of girls in rural areas getting married is twice as higher as girls in urban areas (36% vs. 19%).

While the new DHS indicate that the prevalence rate nationally remains the same, it seems there is a widening gap between the North and South of Ghana.
• Teenage Pregnancy

• Fear of stigmatization by the society in case of pregnancy

• Protecting virginity and unwanted pregnancy

• Urge to conform to tradition/religion (gender norms and roles)

• Poverty at the family and community level

• Female children as “financial burden” / Fear of female children not doing well in school

• Teen- choices and search for a “better life”/ peer pressure
Article 14 of the Children’s Act of Ghana clearly provides for the protection of the rights of children against any form of marriage and spells out punitive measures.

Some offences identified in the Criminal Code 1962 (Act 29) that border on child marriage:

**Section 109:** Compulsion of Marriage

**Section 71:** Exposing a child to danger

**Section 72:** Negligently causing harm

**Section 91:** Abduction of a Child under 18 years

Any person who commits these offences is guilty of a misdemeanour. This carries a one-year imprisonment term and/or a fine subject to the discretion of the courts.

Other policies: Child and Family Welfare Policy, Gender Policy etc.
**Focus**
End child marriage in Ghana.
Began in September, 2014

**Overall Objective**
To promote and coordinate national initiatives aimed at ending child marriage in Ghana.

**Key Results Achieved**
- Establish a coordinating mechanism/ unit
- Develop a national strategic framework
- Influence behavioural change
- Increase public responsiveness to issues of child marriage
OFFICIAL LAUNCH IN FEBRUARY, 2016
By H.E. Pres. John Mahama and H. E. Lordina Mahama

Official Launch
Ghana ends child marriage and empowers the next generation
fairly comprehensive and supporting legal framework in existence in Ghana

Child marriage still exists

Therefore coordinated interventions at different levels and across different sectors (i.e. education, health, social welfare, community development etc)
KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE FRAMEWORK

1. Provide an integrated vision and clear direction to all sectors at various levels involved with prevention and response efforts.

2. Set out clear national goals, objectives, strategies & key interventions across different sectors leading to the gradual elimination of the practice.

3. Ensure coordinated efforts and measurable targets towards ending child marriage in Ghana.
General Context

- Introduction and Background on Child Marriage in Ghana
- Legal and Policy Framework (National & International)
- National Response
- Rationale for Strategic Framework
STRUCTURE OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Strategy

- National Vision
- Overall Goal
- Objectives
- Guiding Principles
- Scope of Framework
- Strategic Direction & Area of Action (interventions and strategies)
- Coordination & Collaboration
- M&E Plan
- Action Plan 2016/2017
- Sustainability efforts
1. Empower and increase the agency of girls at risk

2. Change social norms, culture and attitudes towards child marriage

3. Increase access and improve quality of services responsive to the needs of girls at risk

4. Establish appropriate legal and policy framework

5. Increase generation of use of data and evidence to inform programming
THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS....
To build ownership and seek technical inputs:


For context and practical suggestions:

**Who:** Chiefs, community opinion leaders, parents, girls-at-risk, child brides, in-school youth, out-of-school youth, school authorities etc
To increase political support and strengthen:

Who: First Ladies Office, Parliamentarians, Flag Staff House Special Advisers, Religious Leaders

To ensure there is sufficient financing:

Who: DPs, Ministry of Finance, CSOs, INGOs
Development Process

Engagement of a lead Consultant

Setting up of a Core Working Group for drafting and technical inputs

Consultations across the country in zones:
- Stakeholders meetings – organisations, religious and traditional leaders, CSOs etc
- Focus Group Discussions – community members, Chiefs, girls at risk, child brides etc

Meeting with Parliamentarians

Drafting and reviews

Validation

Development of workplans
THANK YOU