Strengthening National Legal and Policy Frameworks on CEFM and Improving Coordination Among all Key Stakeholders

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1. Girls Not Brides Ghana National Partnership
2. Prevalence of CM in Ghana (data)
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Achievements of GNB-Ghana

• Girls Not Brides Ghana national partnership launched December 2014 with 5 civil society organisations. Today we are 32 NGOs under the umbrella of GNB-GH
• GNB-Ghana is the 6th recognized National Partnership globally approved by Girls Not Brides UK; The Global Partnership to end child marriage.

• Presently 32 NGOs who are members are working with one voice across Ghana to end Child early and forced marriage. This number keeps growing as new members are registering with our mother body in UK to join the stream of organisations out to end child early and forced marriage.

• GNB-Ghana has developed a national strategic plan which demonstrate the path way of change the partnership has adopted to bring CEFM to an end

• Developing strategic plan to advocate for the development and implementation of a national strategic framework to end (CM) child marriage
  – Increased awareness of the impact of child marriage and of potential solutions
  – Expanded policy attention and resources for child marriage work
  – Strengthened learning and coordination among organisations working to end child marriage
Issued press releases on the Day of the African Child calling on the government of Ghana to have a second look at some bills and laws which are in place to protect children from forced marriage but seems to be more blanketed that deterring. Some of the bills and laws are:-

1. *The Children’s Act 1998 (Act 650)* does mention of ‘child marriage’ but with little deterrent or punitive measures against all who perform, permit or promote child marriage. There seems to be no provision in the children’s act which provides for nullification of child marriage hence there is the need for the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to initiate a ‘bill on early and forced marriage through Parliament to be passed into law. The bill should also address its effect on health, education, community and the economy at large.

2. *The Criminal Act 1960* which states the age of sexual consent at sixteen years conflicts with the age of marriage (eighteen) in the Children Act 1998. We call on parliament to look into this conflict of laws and streamlined them to ensure that the rights of children are well protected.
Achiments of GNB-Ghana (continued)

- Seeks collaboration and coordination with Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP), UNICEF Ghana, donors (the Netherlands, Canada and UK), INGOs and local CSOs
- Keen to participate in consultations in the development of the national strategic framework to end CM
- Welcomes the launch of the African Union Campaign to end CM in February 2016

GIRLS NOT BRIDES
Prevalence of CM in Ghana (data)

• 27% of girls are married before they are 18; 5.8 before 15 years
• Regional variations: Upper East (39%), followed by Western (37%), Upper West (36%), Central (31%), Ashanti (31%), Central (28%), Ashanti (23%), Brong-Ahafo (29%), Northern (27%), Eastern (27%) and Greater Accra (12%)
• Teenage pregnancy girls marrying early to avoid shame or to prevent girls getting pregnant outside of marriage
• CM among girls least educated, poorest and living in rural areas
Legal and Policy Context

• International human rights instruments ratified by Ghana include ICESCRs; ICCPR; CRC; CEDAW
• Section 14 of the Children’s Act (Act 560) – minimum age of marriage 18
Legal and Policy Context (continued)

- Section 109 of the Criminal Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29) – marriage against one’s will criminalised
- Article 25(1) of the 1992 Constitution – free compulsory education
Coordination of CEFM in Ghana

- Institutional framework coordinating CEFM: Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ); Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police service; Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP)
- Child Marriage Unit of the Domestic Violence Secretariat: MOGCSP, UNICEF with funding Royal Netherlands Embassy
- National Advisory Committee - Traditional and Religious Affairs, MOGCSP, Education, Health, Civic Education/Community development, Police, Civil Society, Youth Representation, UNICEF/UNFPA, Parliamentarians and Media
- National Stakeholders Working Group
Recommendations

• Applaud government leadership, ownership and commitment of the National Strategic Framework to end CM e.g. MOGCSP, National Steering Committee

• Appreciate and continue inclusive and participatory process of development of legal and policy frameworks e.g. NGOs, CSOs, Government, UN agencies, donors

• Integrated, multi-sectorial responses to end CEFM e.g. National Advisory Committee - Traditional and Religious Affairs, MOGCSP, Education, Health, Civic Education/Community development, Police, Civil Society, Youth Representation, UNICEF/UNFPA, Parliamentarians and Media
Recommendations

• Inclusion of Ministry of Finance to ensure a costed and funded national framework and action plan e.g. % of budget allocated to CEFM

• Coordination and communication across sectors and stakeholders e.g. move from project based initiatives to nation wide approaches; e.g. unified messaging during Day of the African Child (June 16), International Day of the Girl child (October 11)

• Involve youth in the process of developing and implementing the national framework
Recommendations

• Develop and implement initiatives to prevent CM and support married girls noting the regional disparities in Ghana e.g. education, life skills, safe spaces and provision of health, justice and protection services

• Promote participation and role of men, religious leaders and community leaders in promoting positive male role models especially in areas with high prevalence of CM in Ghana

• Conduct evidence based research and establish data systems (at the national and local level) with gender disaggregated data to inform national policy and action e.g. the demographic health survey (DHS) should continue to have indicators on CM as a form of violence against women and children
Recommendations

• Provide free and quality health (including reproductive health – prenatal, child birth, post-natal and family planning services), education (including life skills, health education, reproductive health), protection and expansion of social protection and child rights services.

• Submit periodic reports to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) including monitoring and reporting of child marriage (Ghana is due to report in 2016)

• As a member of ECOWAS, Ghana is well positioned to be a regional champion of CM
The End

#MY LIFE AT 15#
I WISHED TO BE A LIFE CHANGER FOR THE VULNERABLE
SAY NO TO CHILD MARRIAGES
#MYLIFEAT21#

I wish to have been an Accountant.

Pls. Not a Bride!!
# My Life at 15

I wanted to become a lawyer but not a child bride.
“One child, one book, one pen will change the world”

After School Learning and Play Activities

Quality and Accessible Education for All children

“No to Child Early and Forced Marriage” Give smiling faces to children