



Empowering Girls: what the Commonwealth can do to end early and forced marriage

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“My father made the decision to marry me off and I was not given any say at all. In fact, I did not even know about my marriage. It wasn’t until a woman came to my home, giving me money and a dress, and said, ‘you are now my daughter,’ that I realised what was happening. I was shocked, but my sisters advised me to stay silent.” Sabina¹

Summary

‘Forced and servile’ marriage – the practice we term here as early and forced marriage – is recognised by Commonwealth Member States as a harmful practice that constitutes a violation of the most basic and fundamental rights, yet it remains prevalent on a shocking scale throughout the association. The need to deal with the practice was recognised in the final Communiqué of CHOGM 2011 (paragraph 5f), stating that *‘the Commonwealth may address the issue of early and forced marriage’*. Ending this practice – which denies women and girls equal opportunity to engage in civil, economic, and political development – is fundamental to the theme for CHOGM 2013, ‘Growth with Equity; Inclusive Development’, and therefore should be discussed by Ministers in Colombo.

Around the world at least 14 million girls marry under the age of eighteen every year², over half of whom live in the Commonwealth³. Early and forced marriage is a brutal transition from childhood to adulthood that harms the education, health, economic, and social potential of millions of girls across the Commonwealth. The vast majority of those girls who are married early are out of school; importantly, a World Bank study has shown that increasing the number of girls in secondary education by 1 per cent would result in a 0.3 per cent increase in GDP.⁴

All Commonwealth countries, despite their remarkable diversity, have signed up to a set of shared values and principles, including the protection and promotion of basic human rights. These values have recently been reaffirmed by the adoption of a new Commonwealth Charter

This paper sets out the case for the elimination of this harmful practice, and suggests it is time the Commonwealth put its commitments to human rights into practice, empowering girls by ending early and forced marriage. Furthermore, ending early and forced marriage is central to the goal of the 10th Women’s Affairs Ministers Meeting (WAMM), held in Dhaka in 2013, of enabling economic development for women.

¹ Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting Communiqué, Sydney 2011

² United Nations Population Fund ‘Marrying too young’ 2012

³ See table 1

⁴ Dollar and Gatt, 1999, *Gender Inequality, Income, and Growth: Are Good Times Good for Women?*, Gender and Development Working Paper Series No. 1

(Figure 1)

Conventions in the Commonwealth*

The Commonwealth Membership is required to accept and comply with Commonwealth fundamental values, principles and priorities as set out in the 1971 Declaration of Commonwealth Principles, and should “give weight and effectiveness” to previous commitments, as set out in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration issued in Zimbabwe, in 1991.

There are several international and regional instruments prohibiting early and forced marriage that are relevant to Commonwealth member states. These include:

a) The Universal Declaration on Human Rights: states that “marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses”.

b) The Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery 1956: prohibits any institution or practice whereby (i) a woman, without the right to refuse, is promised or given in marriage on payment of a consideration in money or in kind to her parents, guardian, family or any other person or group; or (ii) the husband of a woman, his family, or his clan, has the right to transfer her to another person for value received or otherwise; or (iii) a woman on the death of her husband is liable to be inherited by another person.

c) The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): requires States Parties to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and provides that the “betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.”(CEDAW is ratified by all but one Commonwealth country: Tonga)

d) CEDAW General Recommendation No. 21: provides that “a woman’s right to choose a spouse and enter freely into marriage is central to her life and to her dignity and equality as a human being”. It calls for the prohibition of forced marriage in the name of custom, religious beliefs or ethnic origins and the arrangement of a marriage for payment or preferment. It highlights the link to poverty, which forces women to marry for their own or their families’ financial security. It demands that, subject to reasonable restrictions based, for example on a woman’s youth or consanguinity with her partner, a woman’s right to choose when, if, and whom she will marry must be protected and enforced in law.

e) The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa: provides that (i) no marriage shall take place without the free and full consent of both parties; (ii) the minimum age of marriage for women shall be eighteen years; and (iii) every marriage shall be recorded in writing and registered in accordance with national laws in order to be legally recognised. (Botswana is the only African Commonwealth country neither to have signed nor ratified the Protocol. Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Swaziland and Uganda have signed, but not yet ratified it.)

f) The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child: prohibits child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys and demands legislation to specify the minimum age of marriage to be eighteen years. (All but one of the African Commonwealth countries have ratified the Charter: Swaziland has signed it but not as yet ratified it.)

g) The Convention on the Rights of the Child: elaborates on the substantive rights found in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) with a focus on the particular vulnerabilities of children. While no article specifically deals with early or forced marriage, Article 28 recognises the right of the child to education and calls for measures to reduce drop-out rates. Article 31 asserts a child’s right to rest and leisure and to engage in activities appropriate to the age of the child. (The CRC has been signed by every Commonwealth country.)

Every Commonwealth member state has signed and/or ratified one or more of these conventions. Therefore, Commonwealth member states have specific obligations to ensure compliance with these international law principles.

* In compiling this list, we have drawn heavily on the work of Professor B. Meyersfeld. We are very grateful for her assistance.

Empowering girls in the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth has a strong foundation of commitments, conventions and treaties upon which to act towards greater gender equality and the ending of early and forced marriage (Figure 1). None of the Commonwealth's democratic or developmental goals can be achieved without first empowering its women and girls, who represent more than half of the association's two billion people. Early and forced marriage represents a significant barrier to girls' education, maternal health with girls giving birth before their bodies are ready to cope with the rigours of childbirth, and to female economic empowerment, as well as breaching a girl's fundamental human rights. The aspiration of equitable development cannot be realised without combatting early and forced marriage.

The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015 (PoA), is a comprehensive framework negotiated in 2004 by Commonwealth Ministers responsible for women's affairs and endorsed by leaders at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Malta in 2005. The PoA builds upon Commonwealth commitments to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The PoA urges countries to promote legal reforms in accordance with CEDAW, incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in the legal system, abolish discriminatory laws and adopt those prohibiting discrimination against women⁵.

In 2010, the Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers, meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados, expressed concern that least progress had been made on MDG 5: Improve Maternal Health⁶. They stressed that it was unacceptable that half a million women are still allowed to die each year from complications in pregnancy and childbirth and that 66 of every 100 such deaths are in the Commonwealth⁷.

The report 'Because You're a Girl; Growing up in the Commonwealth'⁸, launched by the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) and Plan UK in March 2011, highlights the many barriers still faced by girls and women in participating fully in social, political and economic life. The PoA was designed to remove these barriers by identifying gender, human rights and law as priority areas for action⁹ in the Commonwealth.

The 10th WAMM noted the need to '*emphasise the continued focus on women's socio-economic empowerment, as reflected in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015*', and further welcomed the CHOGM 2011 communique '*highlighting the need for promoting women's decision-making at all levels, increasing efforts to eliminate gender-based violence and recognising women as agents of change for economic development.*' These goals cannot be met without combatting the underlying barriers to achieving them, significantly including early and forced marriage.

⁵ Article 3.25, Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015, 2005

⁶ Article 7, Ninth Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting Communiqué, Bridgetown 2010

⁷ Article 7, Ninth Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting Communiqué, Bridgetown 2010

⁸ Because You're a Girl; Growing up in the Commonwealth, Royal Commonwealth Society and Plan International (2011) – http://www.plan-uk.org/assets/Documents/pdf/Because_you_re_a_girl_-_Growing_up_in_the_Commonwealth_2011.pdf

⁹ Article 3.1, Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015, 2005

Figure 2

Causes of early and forced marriage*

Gender inequality

Across the globe, women and girls continue to occupy a lower status in society than men as a result of social and cultural traditions, and attitudes and belief systems that deny them their rights and stifle their ability to play an equal role in their homes and communities.

Although gender roles differ between cultures and generations, and vary in relation to other factors – including economic status, class, ethnicity, caste, sexuality, religion, HIV status or disability – gender norms generally work to the disadvantage of women of all ages, with youth reducing the status of a girl or young woman within her household and community even further.

Because a girl does not have the same standing as her male peers, she is not perceived to have the same skills or capabilities, and so there is less value in educating her. This inevitably contributes to the view that a 'good marriage' is the most important way to secure a girl's wellbeing. Gender inequalities also contribute to early marriage through their impact on formal legal systems such as unequal laws of consent for boys and girls, helping to reinforce the idea that it is suitable for girls to marry at an earlier age than boys. For example in Cameroon, the legal age for marriage for boys is 18, whereas for girls the age is 15. At the local level, patriarchal customary laws and traditions give women and girls less negotiating power around marriage, sexual and reproductive health and rights issues.

Poverty

A chronic lack of income severely impacts on household decision-making and may result in girls being viewed as an economic burden. The high cost of raising children and the perception of girls' potential to earn an income as comparatively poor, pushes girls out of their homes and into marriage. For families facing chronic poverty, marriage often seems like the best way to safeguard girls' futures and lessen their economic burden. Parents often feel they have no other option than to see their daughters marry, and these ideas are communicated to their children.

Negative traditional or religious norms

Negative social and religious norms perpetuate and can help to justify early and forced marriages. For myriad cultural, religious and practical reasons, in many countries the importance of preserving family 'honour' and girls' virginity is such that parents push their daughters into marriage well before they are ready. Girls may also be married early to older men in the belief that a husband will provide a safeguard against 'immoral' or 'inappropriate' behaviour. Equally, where girls become pregnant, either through consensual sex or rape, the stigma attached can lead families to view the girls' rights and wellbeing as secondary to the preservation of family 'honour'. Early and forced marriage can also be seen as a strategy for punishing or controlling girls who rebel against their family or communities' expectations.

A number of 'traditional' practices surrounding early and forced marriages are essentially a means of consolidating relations between families or a way of settling disputes or sealing deals over land and property. In Pakistan, the Watta Satta or 'exchange marriage' is a common way of exchanging girls between families in order to strengthen familial ties. Dowry or bride-price systems, in which gifts or money change hands in exchange for a bride, can offer powerful financial incentives for families to consider early marriage. It is important to differentiate between situations in which 'tradition' or religion is the driver of early marriage and those in which cultural justifications are attributed to decisions that are, at heart, economically driven. Family income and rural, as opposed to urban, location can cause significant variation in early marriage practice amongst families with the same cultural traditions and religious beliefs.

Weak enforcement of law

A failure to enforce legislation means that in some areas families are not even aware that in marrying their daughters they are breaking the law. Girls themselves may also not be aware of their rights and legal status. Though progress is being made: in Nigerian states that have legislation prohibiting early marriage, there is much more awareness amongst girls in the last year of primary school of the importance of abolishing early marriage.

In countries such as Malawi and Bangladesh, most girls will be married before the age at which they can legally do so, and yet prosecutions are seldom brought, contributing to a belief that such marriages are acceptable and penalties are unlikely. Equally, marriage brokers and others who actively perpetuate the problem are seldom prosecuted, meaning that the financial rewards from brokering a marriage continue to outweigh the legal risks. In addition, girls who have been married often find it difficult to dissolve their marriages as they try to negotiate legal systems that are not designed to meet their needs.

Conflict, disasters and emergencies

Disasters and emergencies increase economic and social pressures on households and many families that would not previously have considered early marriage turn to it as a last resort. Food insecurity in Kenya has led to the phenomenon of 'famine brides'. Girls in India and Sri Lanka have been pressed into marriages with 'tsunami widowers', in many instances doing so to receive state subsidies for marrying and starting a family. And in Sri Lanka, where rates of early marriage are normally relatively low, girls have been married to protect them from recruitment into militia.

* Adapted from Breaking Vows: Early and Forced Marriage and Girls Education (Plan UK, 2011)

Ending early and forced marriage

Marriage is a formalised, binding partnership between consenting adults. Child marriage, on the other hand, involves either one or both spouses being children and may take place under civil, religious or customary laws with or without formal registration. It is early because girls marry before the age of 18, and it is forced because girls at that age lack the capacity to give informed consent, even when asked.

Early and forced marriage is known to affect every region in the Commonwealth

The table in Annex 2 highlights the known prevalence rates per Commonwealth country based on the available data. Data gaps exist, including for the Pacific Island region where the practice of early and forced marriage is hard to quantify as it is often indirectly sanctioned as being part of customary law. For example, enforcing even the legal minimum age for marriage (15 years old) in the Solomon Islands is very difficult because customary law has constitutional status; many Solomon Islanders do not have a birth certificate; and registration of marriages is voluntary.

The causes of early and forced marriage are complex, interrelated and dependent on individual circumstances and context

The practice is driven by factors that include gender inequality, poverty, negative traditional or religious norms, and the pressure caused by conflict and natural disasters (see Figure 2). Where strong national laws exist, it is often difficult to enforce them.

Mapping the levels, causes, and consequences of child marriage within countries and regions is therefore essential for the design and implementation of national level frameworks and programme design, as well as tracking progress in reducing child marriage. It is important to recognise that the drivers and prevalence of child marriage vary within and across countries and communities.

Ending early and forced marriage

Given the complex and interlinked causes and consequences of child marriage, the most effective policy and programme interventions are those that take a holistic approach by: supporting and promoting children's rights; enabling girls to stay in school and receive a quality education; addressing economic insecurity; building capacity; and enabling and empowering individuals and communities to act to address the social and cultural norms and attitudes which result in child marriage.¹⁰

Experience has shown that the strongest programme interventions foster information, skills, and networks for girls in combination with community mobilisation.¹¹ Preventing another generation of child brides is part of the response needed, but more must also be done to address and support the unique needs of those girls and boys who are already married.

¹⁰ IPPF, UNFPA, The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, *Ending Child Marriage: A Guide For Global Policy Action*, IPPF: London, 2006.

¹¹ International Centre for Research on Women, *Solutions to End Child Marriage: What the Evidence Shows*, Washington D.C.: ICRW, 2011.

Plan International's global report '*A girl's right to say no to marriage: Working to end child marriage and keep girls in school*' contains **key recommendations to national government and the international community** for tackling child marriage across the world.¹² These include:

- Developing and implementing effective legislation
- Improving girls' access to, and experience of, quality primary and secondary education
- Engaging and mobilising parents, teachers, religious leaders and community members
- Providing comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services
- Supporting economic and livelihood opportunities
- Supporting girls and boys who are already married
- Recognising and promoting the participation of girls and boys in decisions that affect them

Reform: realising rights and taking leadership

The Commonwealth stands on the brink of a dynamic new phase in its history. The recently signed 'Commonwealth Charter' sets out the core values and aspirations of all Commonwealth Member States. This charter sets out the Commonwealth's commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other related human rights covenants. It recognises that gender equality and women's empowerment are essential components of development and basic human rights – specifically, Article 16 (2) states that 'Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses'. Furthermore a number of global processes – notably including the CHOGM 2013 theme of 'Growth with Equity; Inclusive Development' – in which members of the Commonwealth are engaged highlight the centrality of girls' and women's rights to a new development agenda, as well as the importance of eliminating early and forced marriage as part of a wider effort to combat gender inequality.

The Eminent Persons Group (EPG), established in 2009, was mandated to explore and recommend ways to raise the profile of the Commonwealth and ensure that it remains 'relevant to its times and people in the future'. The EPG final report, entitled 'A Commonwealth of the People: Time for Urgent Reform', stresses the need for the Commonwealth to stand up for the values it declares so fundamental to its existence if it is to revitalise and remain relevant. Their final recommendations are shaped to advance the values of human rights, democracy and rule of law.

It places emphasis on the centrality of a human rights agenda and asks that all Commonwealth governments ensure that women are not 'discriminated against in law or practice'. The Final Communiqué of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2011 welcomed the report of the EPG and adopted 30 of the resolutions with immediate effect, including authorising the Secretariat to strengthen its advocacy of women's issues.

The 2011 CHOGM Communiqué also crucially asserted that "... the Commonwealth will address the issue of early and forced marriage, and consider actions to support the rights of women and children and to share its best practices to promote the implementation of measures to tackle early and forced marriage".

The new Commonwealth Charter, signed in December 2012, reaffirms the commitment of the Commonwealth to human rights and democracy, and agrees to address "specific needs of women in all aspects of law, public policy and public resources" to ensure that they are not discriminated against in law or practice, as well as reaffirming a stronger role for the Secretariat in advocacy of women's issues.

¹² Davis, Postles, and Rosa, *A girl's right to say no to marriage: Working to end child marriage and keep girls in school*. Plan International, 2013. <http://plan-international.org/files/global/publications/campaigns/full-report-girls-right-to-say-no-marriage-english.pdf>

The Global Gender Agenda

The recent Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 15-17th June 2013, discussed the new global gender agenda to emerge after the Millennium Development Goals, recommending that '*the context of the post-2015 development framework should address gender inequality in social institutions, norms and practices*'. Ministers agreed the Commonwealth should support efforts to improve gender equality in the post-2015 agenda. A recent report from the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 development agenda has recommended a twin-track approach. The High Level Panel also suggested a specific target on eliminating child marriage as part of their illustrative framework for a new development agenda.

Furthermore, the agreed conclusions from the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women highlight the need to end the practice of child, early and forced marriage, asking states to:

Review, enact and strictly enforce laws and regulations concerning the minimum legal age of consent and the minimum age for marriage, raising the minimum age for marriage where necessary, and generate social support for the enforcement of these laws in order to end the practice of child, early and forced marriage¹³

Taking the Lead

Global momentum on tackling the root causes of gender inequality, and eliminating harmful practices such as early and forced marriage, is growing. Discrimination against women in all its forms is not unique to the Commonwealth, but the association can play a more active and meaningful role in trying to bring about change, and it is clear that the values and ideals of the Commonwealth would support Member States in taking all possible practical measures to achieve that change. When 53 leaders speak with a collective voice on some of the most challenging issues affecting today's world, they do so with great moral authority. Global consensus around the need to end early and forced marriage is building; if the Commonwealth acts now it can demonstrate the global moral leadership which defines its unique identity on a crowded international stage, providing an opportunity for the Commonwealth to demonstrate its relevance in the 21st Century.

Commonwealth Member States must take this historic opportunity to end early and forced marriage, making good on their existing commitments. There is a clear appetite for the Commonwealth to develop an action plan for ending early and forced marriage, assisting its member states in implementing the commitments they have made to protecting and upholding basic human rights. The recommendations outlined here reflect the need for the leaders' commitment to tackling this issue, but more importantly, the agreement to implement practical steps. This realisation of rights, ensuring equitable development and mutual prosperity, needs to be at the heart of the Commonwealth project for girls and for all peoples within the Commonwealth.

¹³ Commission for the Status of Women, Report on the fifty-seventh session, New York, 2013, Paragraph B (qq), PP12

Recommendations

We urge Commonwealth Member States to build on their commitments as signatories to international human rights frameworks and lead action to bring early and forced marriage to an end, thereby increasing girls' access to education, economic development and a healthy life.

In particular, we call on Commonwealth Member States to:

1. Ensure that the 2013 Heads of Government Communique to be agreed in Colombo this November strengthens the Commonwealth's commitment to tackling early and forced marriage including a commitment to developing a Plan of Action to End Early and Forced Marriage in the Commonwealth
2. Take forward national level action and investment to end early and forced marriage in particular through the following key interventions:
 - a. The development and implementation of effective legislation
 - b. Improving girls' access to quality education and enabling their economic empowerment
 - c. Engaging and mobilising parents, teachers, religious leaders and community members
 - d. Ensuring the participation of girls in decisions that affect them
 - e. Supporting girls and boys who are already married
 - f. Supporting economic development and livelihood opportunities
 - g. Providing sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services.
3. Work together as Member States, and through groups such as WAMM, to support the adoption at the UN General Assembly of a resolution to address child marriage as a violation of children's rights.
4. Work together to ensure that any post Millennium Development Goals Framework includes ending early and forced marriage amongst its objectives.

Table 1	Percentage married by 18 (20-24 year olds)	Population 20-24 year old females	Number married by 18 in cohort	Estimated number married per year by 18
Bangladesh	65	7,261,000	4,719,650	943,930
Belize	26	17,000	4,420	884
Cameroon	38	952,000	361,760	72,352
Ghana	25	1,124,000	281,000	56,200
Guyana	23	29,000	6,670	1,334
India	47	54,724,000	25,720,280	5,144,056
Jamaica	9	111,000	9,990	1,998
Kenya	26	2,067,000	537,420	107,484
Lesotho	19	104,000	19,760	3,952
Malawi	50	681,000	340,500	68,100
Maldives	4	20,000	780	156
Mozambique	48	1,064,000	510,720	102,144
Namibia	9	113,000	10,170	2,034
Nigeria	39	7,142,000	2,785,380	557,076
Pakistan	24	8,779,000	2,106,960	421,392
Papua New Guinea	21	295,000	61,950	12,390
Rwanda	8	577,000	46,160	9,232
Sierra Leone	48	269,000	129,120	25,824
Solomon Islands	22	24,000	5,280	1,056
South Africa	6	2,513,000	150,780	30,156
Sri Lanka	12	810,000	97,200	19,440
Swaziland	5	63,000	3,150	630
Tanzania	37	2,070,000	765,900	153,180
Trinidad and Tobago	11	66,000	7,260	1,452
Uganda	41	1,846,000	756,860	151,372
Zambia	42	596,000	250,320	50,064
			Total	7,937,888

Table 2	Percentage of women aged 20-24 married by age 15*	Percentage of women aged 20-24 married by age 18*	Ratification of international Conventions		
			UN CRC	ICCPR	CEDAW
SOUTH ASIA					
Bangladesh	29	65	Yes	Yes	Yes
Brunei Darussalam	-	-	Yes	No	Yes
India	18	47	Yes	Yes	Yes
Malaysia	-	-	Yes	No	Yes
Maldives	0.3	3.9	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pakistan	7	24	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sri Lanka	1	12	Yes	Yes	Yes
Singapore	-	-	Yes	No	Yes
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA					
Botswana	3	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cameroon	13	38	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ghana	5	25	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kenya	6	26	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lesotho	2	19	Yes	Yes	Yes
Malawi	12	50	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mauritius	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mozambique	14	48	Yes	Yes	Yes
Namibia	2	9	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nigeria	16	39	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rwanda	1	8	Yes	Yes	Yes
Seychelles	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sierra Leone	19	48	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Africa	1	6	Yes	Yes	Yes
Swaziland	1	5	Yes	Yes	Yes
Uganda	11	41	Yes	Yes	Yes
UR Tanzania	7	37	Yes	No	Yes
Zambia	9	42	Yes	Yes	Yes
NORTH AND LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN					
Antigua and Barbuda	-	-	Yes	No	Yes
Canada	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bahamas	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Barbados	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Belize	-	26	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dominica	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grenada	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Guyana	6	23	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jamaica	-	9	Yes	Yes	Yes
Saint Kitts and Nevis	-	-	Yes	No	Yes
Saint Lucia	-	-	Yes	No	Yes
St Vincent and the Grenadines	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Trinidad and Tobago	2	11	Yes	Yes	Yes

EUROPE					
Cyprus	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Malta	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
United Kingdom	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
PACIFIC REGION					
Australia	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fiji Islands	-	-	Yes	No	Yes
Kiribati	-	-	Yes	No	Yes
Nauru	-	-	Yes	Signed only	Yes
New Zealand	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Papua New Guinea	-	21	Yes	Yes	Yes
Samoa	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Solomon Islands	-	22	Yes	No	Yes
Tonga	-	-	Yes	No	No
Tuvalu	-	-	Yes	No	Yes
Vanuatu	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes

MAIN DATA SOURCES:

* Percentage of women aged 20-24 married by age 15 - Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), compiled by Plan UK

** Percentage of women aged 20-24 married by age 18 - UNICEF (2011) State of the World's Children 2011, compiled by UNICEF from Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), DHS and other national surveys (NOTE: While data for this category is available from DHS, UNICEF's research into rates of child marriage provides more up-to-date research, covering more regions. DHS and UNICEF research was not combined by Plan UK for this category, as in some instances data differed slightly, based on UNICEF's incorporation of MICS data.)