

**Zonta International United Nation Committee
Individual Report Form, 2018-2020**

Purpose of the meeting:

UN Event

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Relating to:

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere
 5.2 End all forms of violence against women - public and private - including trafficking and other types of sexual exploitation
 5.3 Eliminate harmful practices, such as FGM, fistula, child early and forced marriage
 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid, domestic work; domestic sharing of responsibility; decent work; WEPS and equal pay
 5.5 Full and effective leadership in all areas of decision-making
 5.6 Ensure access to sexual and reproductive health and rights

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Education

Your Name

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Date of Meeting

Date of Submitted Report

May 23, 2019

June 3, 2019

Name of meeting

Meeting and Location

28th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice 2019 CCPJC
SIDE EVENT: Child and Forced Marriage in Humanitarian Settings: An In-creasing Trafficking Issue?
UN Vienna

INTRODUCTION

Child and Forced Marriage is a global violation of human rights that can be found in all cultures, religions, ethnicities and countries around the world. This event is focusing on Child and Forced Marriage in humanitarian settings in times of crisis, especially in conflict situations, displacement and natural disasters.

SPEAKERS

The Side Event organized by Zonta International, the Academy of Criminal Justice and Soroptimist International gathered these key speakers and the moderator

Khojesta Fana Ebrahimkhel H.E. Ambassador of Afghanistan to Austria

Philip Reichel Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS)

Linda Witong Soroptimist International

Susanne von Bassewitz Zonta International - Moderator

SUSANNE VON BASSEWITZ opened the Side Event with presenting the UNICEF/UNFPA Global Program to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage that Zonta International joined.

Women world wide lack basic services, they are faced with violation of human rights in any of their life situation – as a child, as a girl, as member in the family, disadvantaged concerning going to school, severe lack concerning health and “natural enjoyment of life”. The adoption of the Convention to end discrimination against women CEDAW 40 years ago (1979) did not impact as much as the international community hoped for. The increasing trafficking in persons over the last years – fuelled by the increased throng of refugees - put additional pressure on governments to implement and monitor CEDAW as well – and even more so – as adopting laws against trafficking. The structural causes of human trafficking are poverty, lawlessness, social instability, military conflict, natural disasters, weak law enforcement and racial and gender biases. These structural causes represent the broader, necessary requirement for human trafficking to thrive: vulnerability.

The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme promotes the rights of adolescent girls to avert marriage and pregnancy, and enables them to achieve their aspirations through education and alternative pathways. The Global Programme supports households in demonstrating positive attitudes, empowers girls to direct their own futures, and strengthens the services that allow them to do so. It also addresses the underlying conditions that sustain child marriage, advocating for laws and policies that protect girls' rights while highlighting the importance of using robust data to inform such policies.

KHOJESTA FANA EBRAHIMKHEL H.E. Ambassador of Afghanistan to Austria

The Ambassador accepts as one of her most important tasks to “fight” for women’s and girls’ future. In the context of forced/early marriage H.E represents one of the countries that are deeply concerned with the topic in question: tradition, inequality, lack of education and poverty – to name the most decisive causes that seriously interfere. Afghanistan is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Boys and girls are trafficked within the country for commercial sexual exploitation, forced marriage to settle debts or disputes, forced begging, as well as forced labor or debt bondage in brick kilns, carpet-making factories, and domestic service. Afghan children are also trafficked for forced labor and forced marriage.

In the year 2017 the Afghan Government took a concrete step towards addressing child marriage by launching a “National Action Plan to Eliminate Early and Child Marriage”. This is an encouraging development in a country where one of three girls are married before the age of 18. The National Action Plan was developed by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and the Ministry of Information and Culture, with support from UNFPA Afghanistan, the Canadian government – among others. Also, Government adopted a law against trafficking. Knowing the causes for trafficking this law will decisively curb the cases of forced/early marriage.

The plan of action revolves around two approaches: developing and supporting initiatives to prevent and end child marriage, and improving the implementation and enforcement, resp. of laws and provision of services to people affected by child marriage. Now that the National Action Plan

has been officially launched, it will be crucial for all actors to work together on leveraging the funding and resources to ensure it becomes a reality. Indeed, more and more countries are in the process to launch new rules and policies to delay marriage.

Ambassador Ebrahimkhel is confident that with collective action and mutual cooperation, in Afghanistan, regionally and internationally a significant positive change will be achieved.

Her resume: „Afghanistan has still a long way to go!“ but “we will not stop to implement and monitor the Action plan”.

Afghanistan is witnessing an unprecedented involvement of women in all aspects of life. The most effective way to combat violence against women is to make women messengers of peace instead of victims of violence.

PHILIP REICHEL Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS)

Overview of Child and Forced Marriage with Emphasis on Conflict Situations

Philip Reichel being the ACJS representative to the United Nations and teaching at the University of Northern Colorado, has carried out various research and documentation on the subjects of human trafficking and forced marriage. He gave a brief description of early/forced marriage and the connection to trafficking. Forced marriage means that at least one of the marrying partners has not given consent or is too young to knowingly consent. **Child marriage** follows the logic that a minor cannot knowingly consent to an act of commercial sex and is therefore by definition human trafficking; neither can a minor knowing consent to marry and child marriage is an example of human trafficking.

(1) SDGs are the key to encounter trafficking in persons, thus preventing forced/early marriage. Examining the context between early/forced marriage and trafficking he underlines the direct connection to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2030. Child marriage perpetuates poverty, inequality and insecurity. If we do not end child marriage eight (out of 17) of the SDGs cannot be met! These are: 1 poverty, 2 hunger, 3 health, 4 education, 5 gender equality, 8 decent income, economic growth, 10 reduced inequality, 16 Peace, justice, strong institutions. Reasoning: in particular Goals 1 through 4 affect the great majority of women and girls. Goal 10 women are again highly disadvantaged. More detailed explanation -

Goal 5: Gender Equality:

- Child marriage is rooted in inequality between men and women and discriminatory views towards a girl's value, sexuality and role in society
- Ending child marriage is a strategic way of tackling gender inequality and shifting the discriminatory norms that perpetuate child marriage
- We need to empower girls so they can choose if, when and whom they marry!

Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions

- Child marriage is a form of violence against girls and a violation of their most fundamental human rights.
- Child brides often face violence at the hands of their partners or their in-laws, especially if there is a large age difference.

- The violence of forced sexual initiation and early pregnancy have a lasting impact on married girls' physical and mental health throughout their life.

(2) Causes for trafficking

The causes for trafficking have been discussed by H.E Ambassador of Afghanistan (*see above*). There are confounding factors: Some parents sell their children, entrust them to more affluent friends or relatives, or agree that their child can be married in the hope that the child may escape poverty and have a better life with more opportunities. However that practice with good intentions may create vulnerability for the children. In addition, gender norms that devalue, abuse and exploit women and girls with little opportunities of upward mobility rendering them more vulnerable to human trafficking.

War and conflict situations can lead to massive forced displacement. Furthermore, climate change produces disasters entailing displacement, trafficking may then increase by 20-30 percent as the UN Environment Programme indicates. In addition, INTERPOL warns that disasters and armed conflicts may increase the exposure of women to trafficking as families are disrupted and livelihoods are lost.

(3) Response of the international community

In response to the above root causes, UNODC provides prevention strategies like discouraging the demand for the services of trafficked persons, providing public education, implement and enforce border control and preventing the corruption of public officials. This toolkit is based on the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace, and security, adopted in the year 2000. The resolution that acknowledges the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls is based on four pillars:

- Participation of women at all levels
- Protection of women and girls from gender-based violence, especially in refugee camps
- Prevention by improving intervention strategies, including prosecution as well as strengthening women's rights
- Advancement of relief and recovery with particular consideration of gender aspects, again including the civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps.

As of January 2019, 79 nations have created National Action plans NAP – see Afghanistan!

A number of subsequent resolutions followed the Security Council Resolution 1325:

- SCR 1820 (2008) Recognizes that conflict-related sexual violence is a tactic of warfare
- SCR 1960: (2010) Provides measures to end impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence
- SCR 2122: (2013) Facilitate equal and full participation of women
- UN General Assembly's 3rd Resolution on Child, Early and Forced Marriage (NOV 2018)

(4) Including men in the solution

Peace building requires an awareness of how men and women together can better contribute to sustainable peace and security. Therefore expanding knowledge of men's diverse experiences during war and the underlying causes and mechanisms that lead to violent behavior will have decisive implications on politics. In particular, understanding the various paths to violence is particularly important when dealing with post-conflict situations.

LINDA WITON Soroptimist International - Trafficking and Climate Change – the Water Crisis
Linda Witon pointed out a most impressive aspect in the context of early marriage: the interdependence between climate change and migration and trafficking, resp. Her expositions basically drawn from Michael Gerrard's research study at Columbia University reveal that climate change aggravates the situation for women and girls, in particular in the warmer regions of the world. Climate change - flooding, drought, food security, water scarcity or contamination – and its acceleration represent the major contributors to migration and displacement, which in turn have an impact on law and policy. Climate change creates poverty which leads to political instability and people's only way out of the dilemma – in its true sense - results in migration and trafficking. It will hit women, girls and the poor. Draught worsened refugee crisis in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa as well as in other parts of the continent. Drought forced about 1.5 million Syrian farmers to move to overcrowded cities – with the result of political instability and great waves of refugees.

Again Michel Gerrard worries that international agreements and domestic laws might not be able to combat the scale of human trafficking as a result of climate change. "Unless there's corresponding dramatic rise on the governmental resources devoted to enforcement, we simply won't have enough people carrying out the enforcement." In the end it is vital to improve the ability of vulnerable communities to stay in place so that they would not be tempted or lured away by human traffickers. Strengthening enforcement against traffickers may be the more sustainable way to curb trafficking than supporting the victims of it.

Climate change represents one of the most profound injustices in today's society, because those who will suffer the most, those displaced from their homes are the poorest among us – those who contributed the least to the excess use of resources that is at the root of much of the problem. There is an urgent need for people, to protect the environment and reduce the suffering of the least fortunate."

Q&A

The audience reacted to the UNICEF/UNFPA program and suggested, that experienced women, "role models" should be integrated in the program to contribute to the training. In that respect it is agreed that inclusion of men in the program is crucial. In fact, every one can contribute, the UN Women's "HeForShe" initiative is an example how to promote inclusion.

Participation in the Side Event

The Side Event attracted 46 participants, representing various NGOs with focus on women - ZI, SI, IFBPW, SIW, Inner Wheel, BPW, ICW, GWI - numerous members of UN Commissions (UNODC, UNOV). The complete list can be consulted with the ZI UN Committee chair and the author, respectively.

Follow up requested with (please check any that apply):

- UN Committee Chairman
- Board Liaison
- Other UN Committee team or District chairman (please specify below)
- Advocacy Committee
- Communications Committee
- Other (please specify)