Achieving MDG 1 in the Arab Region: Gender Equality and the Role of Families

Expert Group Meeting on Protecting the Arab Family from Poverty
Doha, June 2-3, 2013

PRESENTATION BY FARZANEH (Nazy) ROUDI OF THE POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU
Percent of Population Living in Poverty

Source: World Bank
Women Ages 20-24 who Married Before Age 18 (Percent)

- Libya: 2%
- Algeria: 2%
- Djibouti: 5%
- Jordan: 8%
- Morocco: 13%
- Egypt: 17%
- Syria: 18%
- Palestine: 19%
- Iraq: 25%
- Yemen: 32%
- Sudan: 33%
- Somalia: 45%
- South Sudan: 52%

Source: PRB
Child Marriage Violates Girls’ Human Rights and Takes a Toll on Families and Societies
International Agreements Condemn Child Marriage

- 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- 1979 Convention of Eradication of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- 1989 Convention of the Rights of the Child (CDC)
- Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)
International Day of the Girl Child was inaugurated on Oct. 11, 2012, with the theme of Ending Child Marriage.
Ending Child Marriage helps countries achieve their Millennium Development Goals
MDG 1
Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

- Child marriage is both a cause and a consequence of poverty
- It passes the cycle of poverty from one generation to the next
- Girls from poor families are more likely to become child brides
Women Ages 20-24 who Wed Before Age 18, by Wealth Quintile, Egypt (Percent)

- Poorest: 30%
- Middle: 19%
- Richest: 5%

Source: Egypt 2008 DHS
MDG 2
Achieve Universal Primary Education

- Education is a powerful way to prevent child marriage
- Primary education → secondary education+
- Secondary education is key to end child marriage
Women Ages 20-24 who Married Before Age 18, by Education (Percent)

- Yemen 2003:
  - No education/some primary: 38
  - Completed primary/some secondary: 28
  - Completed secondary+: 7

- Syria 2009:
  - No education/some primary: 23
  - Completed primary/some secondary: 29
  - Completed secondary+: 2

- Morocco 2011:
  - No education/some primary: 19
  - Completed primary/some secondary: 10
  - Completed secondary+: 0.2

Source: PAPFAM
MDG 3
Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

- Ending child marriage has to be an integral part of efforts to promote gender equality
- Child brides have little opportunity to develop awareness of their rights
- They are in no position to demand their rights
Married Women Ages 20-49 Whose Husbands Are at Least 10 Years Older, by Women’s Age at Marriage (Percent)

- Morocco 2011:
  - <18: 45
  - 18-19: 36
  - 20-24: 26
  - 25-29: 20

- Iraq 2011:
  - <18: 26
  - 18-19: 18
  - 20-24: 14
  - 25-29: 9

Source: PAPFAM
Child Marriage Has Serious Health Consequences

- MDG 4: Reduce child mortality
- MDG 5: Improve maternal health
- MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
Ending Child Marriage Helps Sustainable Development & Partnership

- **MDG 7:** *Ensure environmental sustainability*
  - Slower population growth

- **MDG 8:** *Develop a global partnership for development*
  - Conduct research & disseminate the findings
  - Set policies
  - Implement programs
Broad Approaches Are Needed

- Underlying forces are complex and interrelated

- Collective efforts are needed from all fronts:
  - Social
  - Economic
  - Judicial
  - Religious
  - Political
## Issue Birth Certificate to Every Girl Born

### Status of Vital Registration Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak or dysfunctional</th>
<th>Functional, but inadequate</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti, Lebanon, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Yemen</td>
<td>Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria</td>
<td>Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WHO/HMN, 2013
Uphold Girls’ Rights to Education and Protection

- Provide schools for girls
- Define 18 as the legal minimum age of marriage
- Reform family laws and close loopholes
- Enforce the law
Raise Public Awareness

- Hazards of early marriage and childbearing
- Children’s rights to education and protection against exploitation
Iraqi Men’s Perception of Their Rights

Percent of men who believe they have the right to:

- Force daughter to marry against her will: 16%
- Force daughter to marry before age 18: 33%
- Prevent wife from education: 37%
- Prevent wife from political participation: 40%
- Prevent wife from working outside the home: 47%
- Beat wife if she goes out w/o permission: 50%
- Beat wife if she disobeys: 56%

Source: UN Iraq, Women in Iraq Factsheet, March 2013.
Raise Public Awareness

- Improve school curricula
- Encourage parents to keep daughters in school
- Involve community leaders
- Use the media to convey messages
Gain Political Commitment

- Programs to empower girls and offer incentives to families
- Coordination among different sectors
- Regional and international cooperation
- Research and dissemination
Reaching Out to Young Married Women

- Ensuring that they can continue education
- Improving access to reproductive health care
- Empowering with training programs to improve life skills
- Providing services to victims of domestic violence
Conclusions

Ending child marriage helps:

- Reduce poverty
- Improve gender equality
- Save lives of young mothers and their newborns
- Improve family health and wellbeing
Women Ages 20-24 Who Married Before Age 15 (Percent)

- Morocco: 1
- Egypt: 2
- Syria: 3
- Saudi Arabia: 4
- Iraq: 6
- Somalia: 8
- Yemen: 10

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