

- International and regional conventions, treaties, declarations, resolutions of relevance to country's policy

**Delegation from the United Kingdom**  
***Position Paper for the United Nations Women***

As the cause and fights of the United Nations Women (UN Women) reflect the values of the United Kingdom (UK), we are proud to be a highly motivated member of this United Nations (UN) body since 2011 and also to be among the top five donors to UN Women since our inception. The United Kingdom looks forward to meeting for the topics of 'Eliminating Child, Early, and Forced Marriage by 2030' (CEFM) and 'Supporting the Involvement of Women in Governance and Decision-Making', as well as monitoring and implementing solutions for women's rights being human rights globally.

**I. Eliminating Child, Early, and Forced Marriage by 2030**

Child marriage puts emotional and physical pressure on both girls and boys. All while girls, however, are impacted in a much greater sense, as they are not allowed to finish school and are forced to bear children while still being children themselves. Too often young girls aging from only a few months also fall victim to genital mutilation, by which the parents want to ensure the modesty and purity of their daughters facing a marriage. A progress report by the Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform has shown that from 106 countries, depending on the development status of the country, 18-24 per cent of married women and girls aged from 15-49 have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from their partner. But not only does oppression and the denial of freedom through child and forced marriage affect the individual in a traumatizing way: it prevents a country from developing from a restrictive ideology. These remains of outdated traditions prevent a country from growing economically and within the international community.

Forced Marriage is an offense by law in the UK which can result in 7 years in prison. This includes taking someone overseas to force them to marry or marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage. The United Kingdom recognizes these issues as a form of domestic or child abuse and has consequently established the 'Forced Marriage Unit' (FMU) in 2005. This is a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office monitoring and implementing the government's policy on forced marriage. Through this establishment, victims have the possibility to apply for a Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO). The UK also offers several on-site support and call centers to help the victims. The UK government has collaborated closely (and continues to do so) with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) by publishing 'One Year on Booklet' highlighting the progress to date on actions against CEFM. Through this cooperation the UK and UNICEF have also hosted the Girl Summit in 2014 which is aimed at mobilizing national and international efforts to end CEFM and female genital mutilation (FGM) within a generation. The UK has also supported the African Union in hosting the first African Girl Summit in 2015.

Child and forced marriage are driven by gender inequality, which, in line with target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) of the UN, the United Kingdom is determined to eliminate by 2030. Also the UK is recognizing the 2015 Human Rights Council resolution (A/RES/70/53) to end CEFM and recognize it as a violation to human rights. The UK has also co-sponsored the 2013 (A/RES/68/148), 2014 (A/RES/69/156) and 2016 (A/RES/71/175) UN General Assembly (GA) resolutions on ending CEFM.

To take further actions against CEFM, the United Kingdom deems it necessary to influence domestic marriage laws through advocacy and lobbying. It is essential that people of all ages are empowered by professionals and through advertisement to advocate and campaign against CEFM. Safe spaces and support networks for girls and boys facing child marriage need to be established, while working with communities to ensure that everybody understands the value and vulnerability of young girls and boys. Resources to ensure that girls stay in school and finding financial support to help families pay for their daughters' school costs are going to need to be fastened. To take action internationally, the United Kingdom will continue to support the African Union in not only hosting the African Girl Summit but also implementing policies and support for (child) victims. These measures, as well as simply raising awareness, specifically in developed countries have to be taken to end CEFM where the statistics have shown it to be a highly affected region. According to the UN GA resolution of 2016 (A/RES/71/175), the UK aims to monitor birth registration and enable medical staff to report on the age of underage girls, in order for the government and/or support institutions to be able to reach out to a possible victim. The UK

has committed to the Declaration of Human Rights and encourages all Member States that have also committed, act upon this Declaration.

## **II. Supporting the Involvement of Women in Governance and Decision-Making**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the global human sex ratio which states the ratio of males to 100 females in a population lies at 105. Still, however, men are leading decision-making positions in companies and politics deciding on the very livelihoods of half the world's population – women. The United Kingdom believes that women should be invited to discussions and decision-making processes that affect communities domestically and globally.

Supporting the involvement of women in governance and decision-making will turn out as an individual benefit for women, as it strengthens their role within society simultaneously giving them respect and gives them self-confidence. But supporting women in these aspects also has an impact on society, as mothers spread the idea of gender equality by teaching their children about it and being a role model to their daughters. As a natural consequence, the domestic economy will grow, as women are involved in molding the world we live in today.

The United Kingdom recognizes and highlights the seriousness of this issue and the effect it has on any country's overall performance. The United Kingdom has committed to the SDG's and therefore highlights goal 5 which is aimed at ending gender inequality. Providing concrete solutions, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) acts upon promoting women's participation and leadership in decision-making. These measures include advancing global norms and promoting women's participation. Through the UNDP, the Gender Equality Seal has been established, which helps transforming institutions to achieve gender equality standards in the workplace. The UK proudly is the second largest government core funding contributor to UNDP.

Adopting the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA) of 1995 the UK seeks not only to improve the lives of girls and women within our country but also globally.

Our close work with UNDP implies the United Kingdom's goal to further donations towards the UNDP. We encourage Member States to do so as well, as their work aims to support the involvement of women globally. Raising awareness about the issue and implementing norms globally will help find solutions and contribute to the fulfillment of the SDG's by 2030. The UK is eager to continue and further their support for iKNOWPOLITICS which help build women's skills and knowledge. The UK aims to explicitly encourage women to start careers and create an annual summit through which women can share their experiences in being involved in decision-making.