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BACKGROUND GUIDE:

**United Nations**  
**Women**

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# Table of Contents

History and Background of UN Women

## **Topic 1: Eliminating Child, Early, and Forced Marriage by 2030**

Background of the Topic

Previous Action Taken

What we can do

Questions to consider

Works cited

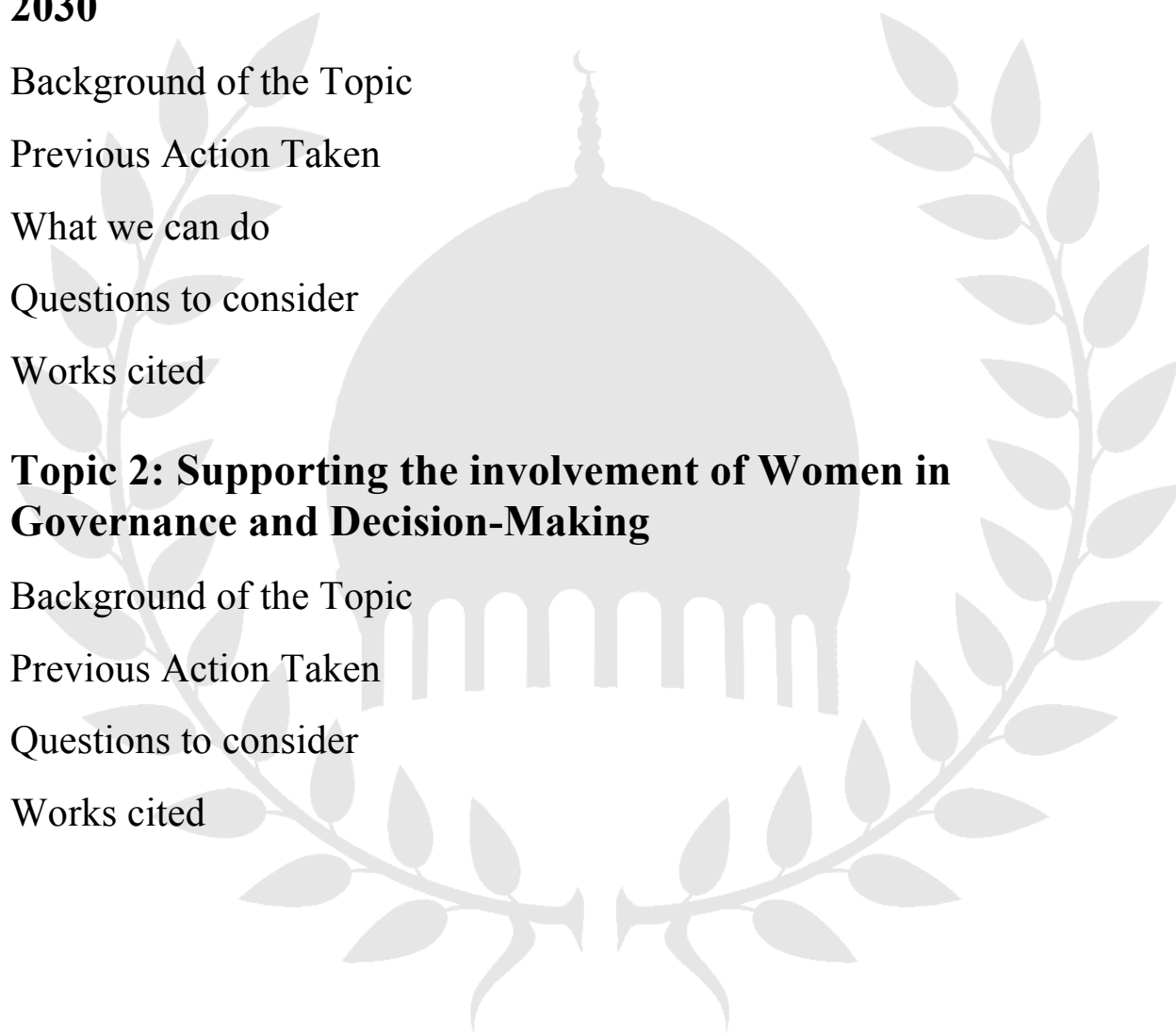
## **Topic 2: Supporting the involvement of Women in Governance and Decision-Making**

Background of the Topic

Previous Action Taken

Questions to consider

Works cited



# History and Background of UN Women

The UN Women committee of the United Nations is the main entity that works towards ensuring gender equality and the empowerment of women around the world. The UN Women committee works with governments on programs and services that stress the importance of gender equality and that they truly benefit women and girls worldwide.

The Sustainable Development Goals play a big role in the work that the UN Women committee delivers to the world. It works towards ensuring that these sustainable goals are a reality to the women and girls of the world. It focuses on four strategic priorities in this field:

- Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems
- Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy
- All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence
- Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action (UN Women)

The UN Women committee was created by the United Nations General Assembly in July of 2010. With this decision, the member states of the United Nations accelerated the goals and the delivery of work towards eradicating the gender gaps and ensuring the empowerment of women worldwide.

# Topic 1: Eliminating Child, Early, and Forced Marriage by 2030

## **Background of the topic:**

Despite being a widespread notion from the beginning of civilization, forced marriage is now considered to be a violation of article 16(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that “marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of intending spouses”.

Child and forced marriage, according to the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, is defined as follows: “child marriage, or early marriage, is any marriage where at least one of the parties is under 18 years of age. Forced marriages are marriages in which one and/or both parties have not personally expressed their full and free consent to the union. A child marriage is considered to be a form of forced marriage, given that one and/or both parties have not expressed full, free and informed consent” (OHCHR).

The most common area in which early and forced marriages occur is the sub-Saharan African region. Around 38% of girls growing up in that area go on to become child brides. In comparison, around 30% of girls experience early marriages. Followed by those two regions are Latin America and the Caribbean at an average of 25%, 17% in the Middle East and North Africa, and 11% in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Plan International, Child).

Child marriage comes as a result of many factors, some of which are poverty, insecurity, and lack of education. Every year around 12 million girls end up getting married before they are even 18 years old (Girls not Brides, SDGs).

In its turn, early and forced marriages have their own consequences.

Being married young can stop many, if not all girls from going to school and getting an education. These young girls would not be able to make any informed decisions for themselves with the lack of education. They would no longer be able to play an active role in their societies. Additionally, early marriages can lead to early pregnancies. As a result of an early pregnancy, young girls are likely to go through a miscarriage or the death of the baby during birth (Plan International, Child). According to UNICEF, a 15 year old girl is five times more likely to die during labor as opposed to a woman in her 20s (ICRW).

## **Previous Action Taken**

The United Nations third General Assembly committee passed a resolution aimed at eradicating child, early, and forced marriage, led by Canada and Zambia. It was cosponsored by 114 member states (Girls Not Brides, UNGA).

The resolution highlights some important areas, and it states that CEFM is harmful for it violates human rights. The resolution states gender inequality as one of the root causes of CEFM. It acknowledges that CEFM is a serious threat to the physical and physiological health of women and girls (Girls Not Brides, UNGA).

The resolution calls on the international community to improve the collection and use of data in order to better understand the situation in regards to CEFM in different regions (Girls Not Brides, UNGA).

The United Nation General Assembly's resolution of session 69|156 on Child, Early, and Forced Marriage acknowledges the importance of education as being a big role player in the prevalence of early forced marriages (GA Resolution).

The resolution calls upon

“States to promote and protect the right of women and girls to education through enhanced emphasis on quality education, including catch-up and literacy education for those who have not received formal education, while recognizing that education is one of the most effective ways to prevent and end child, early and forced marriage and to help married women and girls to make more informed choices about their lives.” (GA Resolution)

It also urges

“governments to promote and protect the human rights of all women, including their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.” (GA Resolution)

## **What we can do**

In order to eradicate child, early, and forced marriage by 2030, there are certain steps to be taken. First and foremost, governments must set a legal age limit of 18 and beyond in order for girls and boys to get legally married. Additionally, governments must ensure that these laws are being followed (Plan International, How)

Secondly, there should be great investments by these governments in the girls and most importantly, their education. It is without doubt that educated girls are more likely to marry at a

suitable age for them to be employed and have proper control over their own lives (Plan International, How).

In conclusion, the notion of child, early, and forced marriage is still widespread. However, with the previous action of the UN and the separate member states of the UNGA, the notion before her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday has decreased from 50% to around 30% in the last 10 years (Plan International, How). That is just one of many more successes that are to come if the people, their governments, and the UN are able to pass legislation that protects these children from forced marriages at a young age.

### Question to consider

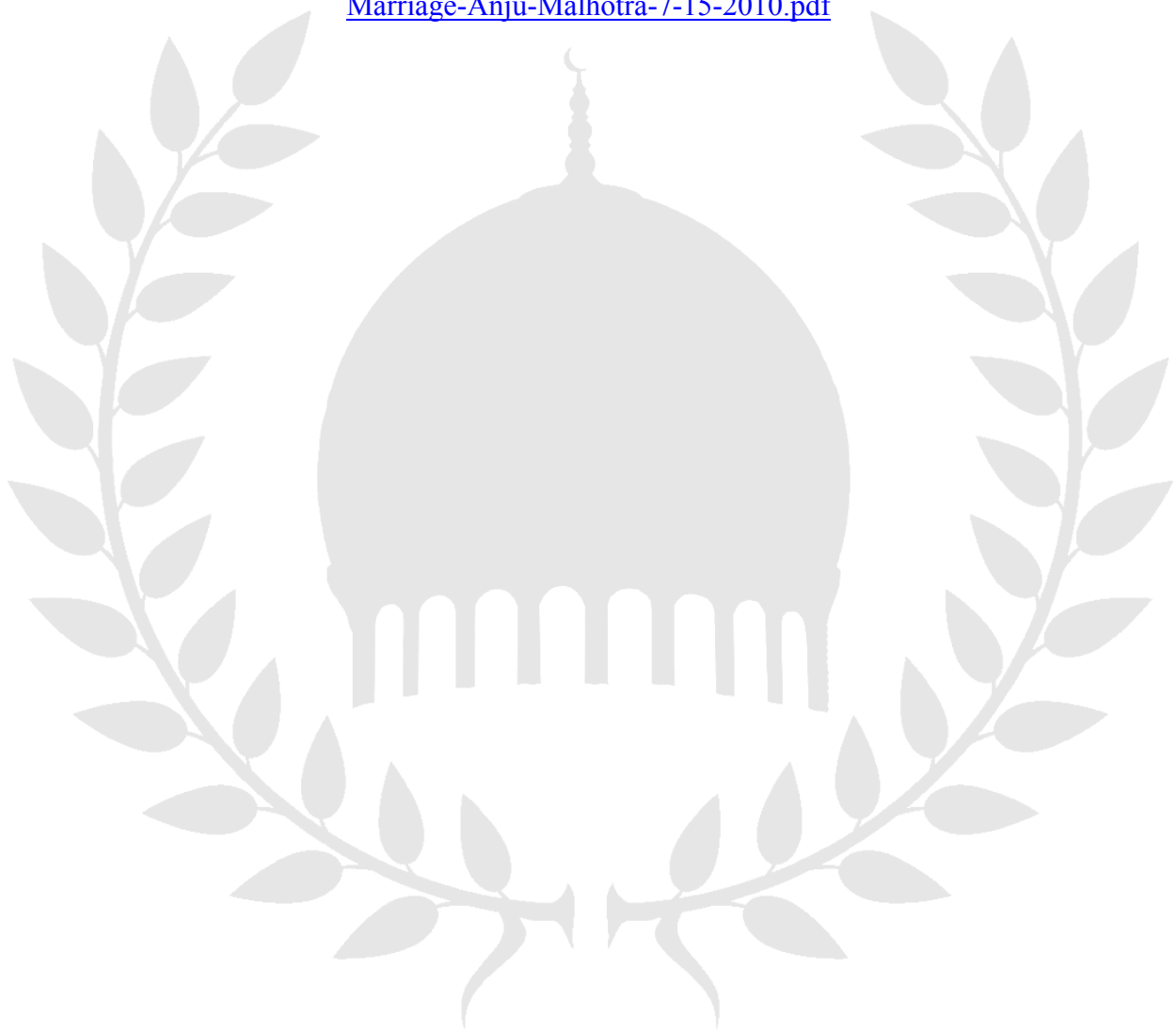
1. What are the root causes of child, early, and forced marriages other than those stated in this guide?
2. How can we target the root causes in order to eradicate the problem, instead of targeting the problem itself and gradually waning it out?
3. How to better implement already existing legislation around the world to fight the notion of child, early, and forced marriages?
4. What other methods could be emphasized and implemented in order to fight the problem head on?
5. How to hold accountable the nations that do not yet follow their own legislation that targets this epidemic?

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## Topic 2: Supporting the involvement of Women in Governance and Decision-Making

### Background of the topic:

Women's political support is viewed as fundamental sign of gender fairness. The dynamic support addressed to female's in all circles of legislative issues include decisions and ideological groups unmistakably mean connecting divisions dependent on sexual orientation. Shockingly, in numerous nations over the world, such political cooperation is blocked because of segregation against females. Females face various hindrances as political competitors and as pioneers which therefore, influence majority rule administration. Boundaries incorporate laws and enactments, sexual orientation imbalance in instruction, generalizations, and minimization of ladies.

Customs and social factors are likewise considered as variables which add to women's underrepresentation in initiative positions which adversely impacts approach commitment of females. Women regularly are exposed to provocation, savagery and terrorizing as apparatuses to bar them from political support. Majority rule government can't be accomplished if women are not dynamic members in basic leadership and spoken to in administration frameworks. Nations with expanded females' investment are more comprehensive and law based. (UN Women)

### Previous Action Taken

Previously, numerous attempts have been taken toward tackling the issue of reinforcing women's place in jobs, specifically in legislative and governmental issues. Various actions have gained ground, yet this issue is inescapable and keeps on harming future advancement. A great contribution includes the creation of the 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which main purpose includes eliminating discrimination acts targeting women. Secondly, various resolutions have been drafted in order to tackle this world crisis such as 1960 in 2010 and 2242 in 2015 supporting the political participation of Females. (UN, SCR)

### Actions taken include the following represented in a timeline:

- **1970's**

1975- March 8<sup>th</sup> officially declared as International Women's day in order to appreciate and support women and females across the world.

1979- First World Conference for Females.



- **1990's**

1993- World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna

1995- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

- **2000-2010**

2000- UN SC passes 1325 resolution

2000- UN Millennium Declaration

2010-UN GA launches UN Entity for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment.

- **2013-Current Day**

Women's rights introduced and forced to be taken into consideration in Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Question to consider**

1. How can we help support and promote women in order to eradicate the problem of gender discrimination in political participation?
2. What is the reason behind why Females are the ones discriminated against in political environment?
3. How can we tackle and fix the reasons why Females are politically discriminated ?

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