



***Promoting girls' enrolment as an effective way  
to combat early marriage in Africa***

*Resolution adopted by the APU Committee of women parliamentarians  
(Ouagadougou, 8 november 2017)*

The Committee of Women Parliamentarians, meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso,

*Considering* that in some countries where the majority of the population is rural, early marriage is still rife,

*Considering* that child marriage is a violation of human rights and one of the main impediments to development,

*Considering* that this phenomenon is detrimental to girls' enrolment and denies them the right to education, as well as to the relevant Sustainable Development Goals,

*Recognizing* that the right of girls to education is a right recognized by national and international instruments,

*Noting* that national laws in some African countries still discriminate against girls,

*Underscoring* the right of children to participate in decisions that affect them,

*Drawing on* international instruments relating to human rights and early marriage

*Considering* that early marriage has numerous harmful consequences and only perpetuates the cycle of poverty,

*Noting* that an international legislative framework remains inadequate and/or is inadequately implemented,

*Aware* of the prevalence of early marriage in Africa,

Recommends:

1. Combating early marriage in Africa by:
  - Providing access to quality education;
  - Improving access to quality primary and secondary education, in a conducive and safe environment for both girls and boys;

- Developing and implementing effective legislation to fight the scourge of early marriage, by:
  - ✓ Limiting the marriage age for both boys and girls, and applying sanctions;
  - ✓ Challenging social and cultural norms by actively mobilizing girls, boys, parents and political leaders to change practices that discriminate against girls and creating social, economic and civic opportunities for girls and young women.
- Providing girls who are already married with options for enrolment and/or vocational training and access to health information and services (including HIV prevention), and protection against domestic violence;
- 2. The involvement of the African people themselves, the main stakeholders in this phenomenon, through a community mechanism designed to prevent and combat early marriage and promote girls' education;
- 3. The implementation of a participatory approach by African countries and their United Nations partners, by:
  - Training parents on child rights issues, including education;
  - Helping parents to understand that the rights of children are interdependent, and that, as parents, they need to know that early marriage is detrimental to education; and that allowing their girl child to marry at a later age gives her the opportunity to continue her education and be a responsible mother to her children;
- 4. Taking into account international instruments relating to human rights, including:
  - The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948)
  - The United Nations Convention on Consent to Marriage, the Minimum age for marriage (1964)
  - The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
  - The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)
  - The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981)
  - The Bamako Declaration for the protection of children (2001)
  - The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (2003)
- 5. Including in the school curriculum, courses on the dangers of adolescent marriages;
- 6. Ensuring the economic empowerment of families so that poverty does not become a cause for dropping out of school;
- 7. Adopting legislation by African parliaments to combat early marriage.