

# MUNAAKAL

THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:  
SOCIAL, CULTURAL & HUMANITARIAN



## AGENDA ITEM:

*Harmful Traditional Practices Against Woman*

*Eliminating Child Marriage by 2030*

LETTER FROM UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL:

Most esteemed participants,

It is my greatest honor to welcome you all as your Secretary-General of Model United Nations of Aldemir Atilla Konuk Anatolian High School which will be held on 19-21 January in Antalya.

Let me introduce myself.I am Devrim Özen. Currently ,I am a 11th grader at Aldemir Atilla Konuk Anatolian High School.

With my precious organization and academic team,our prior goal is to reach the quality that we missed from Model United Nations.I,as your Secretary-General can assure you that since the very first beginning of what we achieved,we tried our best to let you have the best experience.As the results of our numerous discussions about committees in total 4 of them being General Assembly committees,a special committee and lastly Joint Crisis Cabinet. The committees will provide you a wider perspective of what we can expect from future.

As a General Assemly committee,Hana Llapasthica our prospective Under-Secretary-General offered me a committe which will be the SOCHUM.In this committee you are going to discuss about child marriage and harmful traditional practices against woman and eliminating child marriage by 2030.

I would to thank Hana Llpasthica for this such a valuable committee.She is the one of the most important MUNer behind MUNs.She did her best in order to make this committee better.

Delegates study guide is not only source for informations.I highly encourage you to work on this issue to be full of knowledge and comprehensive.

While I have full belief in our Academic Team,our admirable Organization Team with the lead of Bora YENİGELEN and his deputy Berfin Lara ÇAPAR will take the quality higher thank what we expect.

To finish my word I can not wait to see you here to let my dream come true.For debate,for the expereince,for the awards-for whatever reasons,I know it will be an amazing expereince to let my participant Express their thoughts.Concluding my letter,I would like to invite you all to the first edition of MUNAAKAL.I look forward to meeting you in person.

Sincerely

Devrim ÖZEN

Secretary-General



## INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMITTEE:

United Nation's 3rd Committee of the General Assembly is known as Social Cultural and Humanitarian Committee (SOCHUM). SOCHUM is primarily focuses on preserving human rights and tries to enhance globally high standards for the protection of human rights. The

Committee was founded in 1948 in order to comprehend the problems and create solutions for social development and humanitarian crises. SOCHUM deals with specific human rights, including women's rights and advancement of women, rights of refugees, protection of children's rights and so forth.

The Committee also addresses important social development questions such as issues related to youth, family, ageing, persons with disabilities, crime prevention, criminal justice, and international drug control. Alike other UNGAs, SOCHUM works closely with other UN and non-UN bodies, governmental or non-governmental.

Together, they work according to the Charter of the United Nations. In addition, SOCHUM as a UNGA may request topic-specific reports from other UN agencies, such as the Human Rights Council. The UN Secretary-General reports annually to SOCHUM on different agenda items, and the committee vote on the important matters. The votes are to be recorded. At the end of the session, the committee reports to the plenary bodies of the GA on topic-specific items.

## TOPIC A:

### HARMFUL TRADITIONAL PRACTICES AGAINST WOMAN:

#### 1- Definition of common terms:

##### **Harmful traditional practices (HTPs)**

**Traditions** are long-established patterns of actions or behaviours, often handed down within a community over many generations. These customs are based on the beliefs and values held by members of the community. Traditions are often protected by **taboos**, which are strong social prohibitions (or bans) relating to human activity or social custom based on moral judgement and religious beliefs. This means that traditions are not easy to change, because people adhere to these patterns of behaviour, believing that they are the right things to do. Ethiopia has both beneficial traditional practices (such as breastfeeding, relieving women from work after delivery, providing special care and a nutritious diet for a newly delivered mother) and harmful traditional practices.

**Harmful traditional practices** are those customs that are known to have bad effects on people's health and to obstruct the goals of equality, political and social rights and the process of economic development.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines **female genital mutilation** (also called 'female genital cutting' or 'female circumcision') as any procedure which involves the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or which causes any other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or any other non-therapeutic reasons. Instruments used include knives, scissors, razors, and pieces of glass. Occasionally sharp stones and cauterisation (burning) are used.

**Marriage by abduction** is the unlawful carrying away of a woman for marriage. It is a form of sexual violence against the woman. The would-be abductor forms a group of intimate friends and relatives to kidnap the girl without the slightest clue or information being given to the girl's family, relatives or friends. In some cases abduction is followed by rape.

**Polygamy** is a common practice in rural parts of the world. It is a form of marriage in which a person marries more than one spouse. Polygyny (from Greek words: poly = many; gyny = woman) refers to a polygamy in which a man has two or more wives.

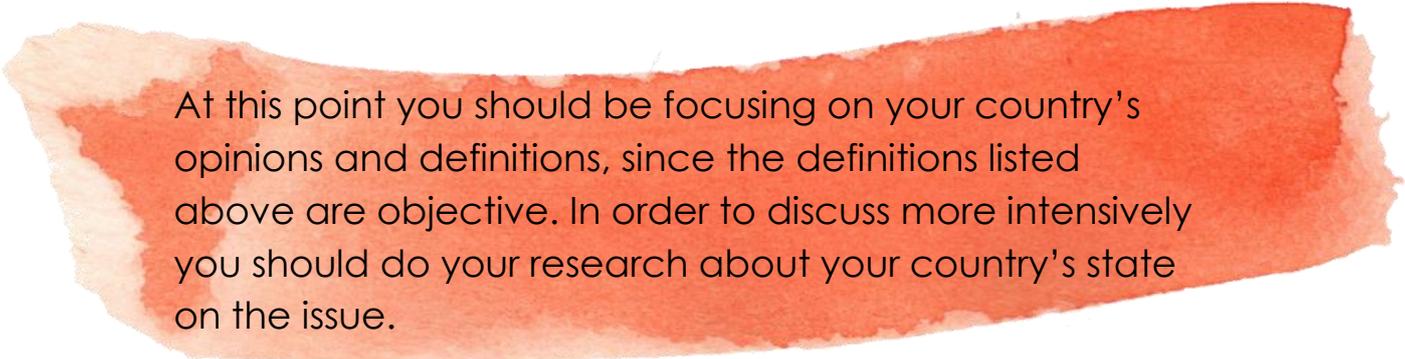
**Violence or murder related to dowry payment**, which happens when new brides are hurt or killed by in-laws as a result of conflicts related to dowry. Dowry is a response to explicit or implicit demands or expectations of the groom or his family.

**Son preference**, The preference for sons over daughters is strong in many societies. There are instances in some countries, for example China and India, where this can lead to

selective abortion of female fetuses. In many societies, daughters are treated differently from sons. Daughters may be given less food, denied education opportunities, not taken to health services when they are ill, or trafficked for work, sexual exploitation or marriage

**“Honor” crimes** occur when a girl or woman is attacked or killed by or on behalf of a family member because of an actual or assumed transgression of certain gender social norms which are framed as sully the honour of a partner, family member etc. Girls and women are disproportionately victims of ‘honour’ killing. If a family thinks that a girl’s or a woman’s behaviour, or suspected behaviour, has offended the family ‘honour’, they may believe that only by killing the supposed offender will honour be restored. Reasons given for ‘honour’ killings include: girls’ or women’s choice of sexual/marital partner; education or employment; behaviour around people of the opposite sex; sexuality, and general failure to conform to family and community cultural expectations. The Honour-Based Violence Awareness Network identifies 5000 ‘honour’ killings internationally, per year. The majority of these cases take place in parts of Asia and the Middle East, but ‘honour’ killings also occur the UK, Europe, America and Australia.

**Early and forced marriage** is any marriage of a child under the age of 18 without their consent.



At this point you should be focusing on your country's opinions and definitions, since the definitions listed above are objective. In order to discuss more intensively you should do your research about your country's state on the issue.

## 2- Introduction to the Issue and Problems:

- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

The FGM had received global attention due to its severe and negative impact on the health and well-being of girls. Efforts to alter or eradicate this practice is often met with suspicion or hostility from those communities practicing them, particularly when efforts originate from outside the community.

According to the World Health Organization, female genital mutilation (FGM), *a procedure involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons, is practiced in 28 African countries.* Cutting ranges from removal of the clitoral hood to its most extreme form, infibulation, involving removal of the clitoris as well as some or all of the labia minora. The labia majora\* are then sealed, leaving only a small opening to allow the flow of urine and menstrual blood. Infibulation is practiced

predominantly in Somalia, the Sudan, and Djibouti as well as in some parts of Ethiopia and Egypt.

**Between 100 million to 132 million girls and women now living have undergone genital cutting.**

In some communities, FGM marks an important rite of passage into womanhood, in others it's believed to guarantee virginity, curb female sexual desires, maintain hygiene, prevent promiscuity, and increase fertility. In most cases FGM is performed without anesthesia and one instrument is shared among all girls who are being circumcised at that particular time. This results into such consequences as sickness or death due to infection, hemorrhage, tetanus, or blood poisoning.

Unfortunately, many women are not aware that the health problems they experience later in life are FGM related and, as a result, problems go unreported. For women and girls, the distress of the procedure can cause long-lasting psychological and physical scars such as:

- Obstetric fistula
- C-sections
- Tearing
- Menstrual problems
- Painful sexual intercourse
- HIV/AIDS
- Repeated FGM due to unsuccessful healing
- Psychological trauma
- Infertility
- Prolonged labor and complications in delivery

\*Parts of the female genital organ.

## Early marriage

Early marriage or child marriage is another major HTP in the world. In many cultures, the tradition of marrying girls at a young age, often to older men, is very common. In such marriages, girls have little to no power and sense of self-determination. Those who marry early cannot stay in school and often have little motivation or family planning ability. They are deprived of their sexual reproductive health and rights. Some of these cultures believe early marriage guarantees a long period of fertility and that child brides may need a smaller dowry.

Females' age at marriage is slowly dropping in Sub-Saharan Africa as young virgins, considered less likely to be infected with HIV/AIDS, are sought as child brides.

Early/child marriage and childbearing are closely linked to low educational attainment, causing severe consequences for the health of both the mothers and their babies. For example, babies born to young mothers are up to 80 percent more

likely to die within their first year of life than are babies born to mothers ages 20 to 29. Similarly, maternal mortality rates are twice as high for women ages 15 to 19 compared to those ages 20 to 29. Early marriage is an increasing focus of reform for governments throughout World. While laws outlining minimum ages for marriage have been enacted in some countries, the laws often fail to prevent forced marriages of the very young. Legal limits on age at marriage typically apply only to unions lacking parental consent; however, marriages arranged by parents can involve children well below a country's legal minimum age. This clearly shows that despite laws and policies being in place, implementation is still far much behind.

- **Son Preference**

Preference for sons is still a powerful tradition that results in neglect, deprivation, and discriminatory treatment of daughters to the damage of their physical and mental health as well as female infanticide and prenatal sex selection. Son preference adversely affects girls through inequitable allocation of food, education, and health care. Male preference begins early in life. Parents with fewer resources may feel that it is more important for male children to survive and be educated as they will carry the family name. Girls in such settings are often fed after boys and receive food of lower nutritional value. Despite significant increases in the number of women who have attained at least seven years of education, there are far fewer females than males enrolled in secondary schools in many countries. This disparity between males' and females' access to education leaves women in lifelong positions of economic and social disadvantage.

- **Poligamy**

In 2000, the United Nations Human Rights Committee reported that polygamy violates the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), citing concerns that the lack of "equality of treatment with regard to the right to marry" meant that polygamy, restricted to polygyny in practice, violates the dignity of women and should be outlawed. Specifically, the reports to UN Committees have noted violations of the ICCPR due to these inequalities and reports to the General Assembly of the UN have recommended it be outlawed. Some states where polygamy is legal are not signatories of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), including Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Malaysia, Brunei and South Sudan; therefore the UN treaty doesn't apply to these countries. It has been argued by the Department of Justice of Canada that polygyny is a violation of International Human Rights Law.

- **Marriage by abduction**

Bride kidnapping, also known as marriage by abduction or marriage by capture, is a practice in which a man abducts the woman he wishes to marry. Bride kidnapping has been practiced around the world and throughout history.

It continues to occur in countries in Central Asia, the Caucasus region, and parts of Africa, and among peoples as diverse as the Hmong in Southeast Asia, the Tzeltal in Mexico, and the Romani in Europe. In most nations, bride kidnapping is considered a sex crime rather than a valid form of marriage. Some types of it may also be seen as falling along the continuum between forced marriage and arranged marriage. The term is sometimes used to include not only abductions, but also elopements, in which a couple runs away together and seeks the consent of their parents later; these may be referred to as non-consensual and consensual abductions respectively. However, even when the practice is against the law, judicial enforcement remains lax in some areas. Bride kidnapping occurs in various parts of the world, but it is most common in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Bride kidnapping is often (but not always) a form of child marriage.

- **Dowry-related violence**

Dowry-related violence is a serious problem that affects the lives of women and girls. Dowry includes gifts, money, goods or property given from the bride's family to the groom or in-laws before, during or anytime after the marriage. The United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women defines dowry-related violence or harassment as "any act of violence or harassment associated with the giving or receiving of dowry at any time before, during or after the marriage.

The violence and deaths associated with dowry demands can constitute domestic violence. Similar to acts of domestic violence, the acts used in dowry-related offenses include physical, emotional, and economic violence, as well as harassment and stalking as means to exact compliance or to punish the victim.

Women often struggle with bringing successful claims of dowry-related violence, as emotional and economic violence are difficult to prove in a court of law. However, dowry-related violence is distinct from domestic violence in that the husband or current partner may not be the only perpetrator of dowry-related violence or death. In-laws, former spouses, or fiancés may also commit acts of dowry-related violence.

While dowry is practiced in many different of the world, dowry-related violence is most prevalent in South Asia, in the nations of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The most common forms of dowry-related violence are battering, marital rape, acid throwing, wife burning, and other forms of violence. Perpetrators may also use methods of starvation, deprivation of clothing, evictions, and false imprisonment as a method of extortion. They often use violence disguised as suicides or accidents, such as stove or kerosene disasters, to burn or kill women for failing to meet dowry demands.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), though predominately focused on improving the quality of education available to children globally, has also taken a proactive stance against dowry death.

On March 8 (International Women's Day), 2009, at a press conference in Washington D.C., UNICEF's Executive Director, Ann M. Veneman, publicly condemned dowry deaths and the legislative systems which allow the culprits to go unpunished. In 2009, UNICEF launched its first Strategic Priority Action Plan for Gender Equality, which was followed by a second Action Plan in 2010. The aim of these plans has been to make gender equality a higher priority within all international UNICEF programs and functions.

### 3- The UN Approach

[-Report EGM harmful practices.pdf](#)

[-FactSheet23en.pdf](#)

*In the light of the information given above, you should take the past UN actions to consideration and try to focus on some other solutions and policies that haven't tried before.*

## **A Timeline of Rights Instruments protecting against HTPs**

1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR)

1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) & International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESR) 1966

1979 Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

1986 The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (also known as the Banjul Charter)

1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

1993 UN Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women – Article 4 requires States to 'exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and in accordance with national legislation punish acts of violence against women whether those actions are perpetrated by the State or private persons.'

1994 Agreements reached at the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo)

1995 Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing) reinforces commitments to remove discriminatory, harmful, and coercive traditional practices

2002 The UN General Assembly, in its resolution on traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls, calls upon all States to adopt national measures to prohibit practices such as FGM/C.

2005 The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, also known as the Maputo Protocol. It calls upon States to take measures to eliminate traditional practices that are harmful to women.

2007-2010 The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women adopts resolutions on ending FGM/C in 2007, 2008 and 2010.

2012 The UN passed an historic resolution, calling on countries to eliminate FGM/C

2013 57th UN Convention on the Status of Women's agreed conclusions called on all member states to develop policies and programmes to eliminate all forms of violence against women and included specific mention of a number of HTPs including early marriage and FGM/C

Questions to Consider:

1. What are Harmful Traditional Practices and where do they come from?
2. Who is affected by HTPs?
3. What kinds of HTPs exist?
4. Are all traditional practices harmful?
5. Why do HTPs continue?
6. Why are HTPs an issue?
7. How do Human Rights Protect Girls and Women against HTPs?
8. What do we mean by Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting?
9. Where do people carry out FGM/C and who is affected?
10. Why does FGM/C have many different names?
11. Is FGM/C required by religion?
12. Is FGM/C ever acceptable?
13. How do we define child marriage?
14. Why do parents arrange marriages for their children under the age of 18?
15. Who is most at risk of being married as a child?
16. What are the inter-linkages between FGM/ C and child marriage?
17. What real harm is caused by HTPs?
18. What can be done to end HTPs?

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