



Canada



## HIGH-LEVEL PANEL CSW67

## Harmful Practices: Catalyzing Innovation to End Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage

9 March 2023 | 11:30 AM to 12:45 PM (EST) | Conference Room 1, UN Headquarters

### CONCEPT NOTE

The Government of Burkina Faso, the African Union's champion for promoting the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), in collaboration with the Governments of Canada, Egypt, Italy and Zambia, the European Union, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have the honor hosting a high-level panel discussion being held on the margins of the 67th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

#### BACKGROUND

Female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage remain recurrent practices throughout the world, despite their formal prohibition in most countries. These harmful practices are widely recognized as a violation of human rights of women and girls, as they prevent them from fully enjoying their rights and opportunities as men. Global progress has been made towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment; target 5.3, eliminating harmful practices.

FGM is a form of discrimination against women and girls that can lead to health consequences that affect their health and well-being. An estimated 200 million girls and women have undergone FGM. Over the last three decades, global progress has been made towards eliminating FGM. Today, a girl is about one-third less likely to be subjected to FGM than she was 30 years ago, and seven in 10 girls and women in FGM-affected countries oppose the practice. While encouraging evidence confirms prevalence rates are declining, progress towards FGM elimination by 2030 across affected countries is uneven and slow.

While the prevalence of child marriage has decreased worldwide – from one in four girls married a decade ago to approximately one in five today – the practice remains widespread. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 100 million girls were expected to marry before their eighteenth birthday in the next decade. Now, up to 10 million more girls will be at risk of becoming child brides as a result of the pandemic. The total number of girls married in childhood stands at 12 million per year, and progress must be significantly accelerated in order to end the practice by 2030 – the target set out in the SDGs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also disrupted the progress towards the full abandonment of FGM and child marriage and put more girls at risk. At the same time, the pandemic also significantly expanded the use of digital technologies and solutions which are making headway in addressing both FGM and child marriage. Previous technology-based interventions that have had successful impacts have been scaled up while new and emerging ones show promising results in mitigating these practices in an effective, timely, and sustainable manner. Increased investments in technology-based interventions that support girls' empowerment and access to prevention and protection services have a strong potential to scale-up programmes in a context of a global polycrisis (climate change, conflict, COVID-19, etc.). However, more research must be done to guarantee that these innovative solutions are

better targeted for the most vulnerable girls and women and more effective in ending child marriage and FGM on regional, sub-national, and national levels.

This High-Level Event is an opportunity to provide a framework for sharing innovative experiences to eliminate harmful practices, work alongside with youth and women led organizations and call for urgent attention and investment—both human and financial—to end child marriage and FGM by 2030.

**OVERALL OBJECTIVES**

This High-Level Event aims to provide a platform for key stakeholders engaged in the elimination of harmful practices to discuss the potential of innovation and technological change to achieve gender equality and ultimately, reach SDG 5.3 by 2030.

The panel will bring forth the challenges, opportunities and innovative solutions in the context of ongoing humanitarian crises such as climate change, COVID-19, conflict and others. By amplifying the voices of young people and women led organizations and the recommitment to end harmful practices by government stakeholders - we can accelerate the elimination of child marriage and FGM.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

The panel will highlight challenges and opportunities that innovation and technological change could bring to programmes aiming to eliminate FGM and child marriage. Overall, the panel discussion would engage with several issues, these include:

- ✓ Reaffirming the commitment to invest in ending FGM and child marriage
- ✓ Sharing innovative experiences using innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for eliminating harmful practices
- ✓ Discuss key challenges and key success factors to fill the digital gender gap

**FORMAT AND PARTICIPATION**

The High-Level Panel will be a multi-stakeholder event involving high level representation from Member States, Governments, United Nations Agencies, Civil society organizations to inspire a global movement for accelerating investment to end FGM. The event will be held in person and also be broadcasted through Un Web TV. Interpretation will be available in French and Arabic.

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

11:25 to 11:35 am	<i>Music/videos</i>
11:35 to 11:40 am	Welcoming by the moderator <b>Alimatu Dimonekene, MBE</b>
11:40 to 11:45 am	Opening remarks: <b>H.E. Nandy SOME/DIALLO</b> , Minister of Solidarity, Humanitarian Action, National Reconciliation, Gender and Family ( <b>Burkina Faso</b> )
11:45 to 11:50 am	<b>Ms. Diene Keita</b> , Deputy Director and ASG, UNFPA
11:50 to 11:55 am	<b>H.E. Eugenia Roccella</b> , Minister of Equal opportunities, Natality and Family ( <b>Italy</b> )
11:55 to 11:57 am	Video: 2021 FGM Hacklab Winner - Ms Roukiatou Sedgo
11:57 to 12:03 pm	<b>Mr. Sanjay Wijesekera</b> , Director, Programme Group of UNICEF
12:03 to 12:08 pm	<b>Ms. Serena Fiorletta</b> , AIDOS - Italian Association for Women in Development

12:08 to 12:13 pm	<b>H.E. Dr. Maya Morsy</b> , Minister of Women and President of the National Council for Women in Egypt
12:13 to 12:18 pm	Video: 'PashaAPP' - Mobile Application to End FGM in Kenya (Bernadette Resian Loloju, CEO of the Anti-Female Genital Mutilation Board in Kenya)
12:18 to 12:20 pm	<b>H.E. Richard Arbeiter</b> , Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations
12:20 to 12:25 pm	<b>Ms. Irena Moozova</b> , Director for Equality and Union Citizenship at the Department of Justice, European Commission
12:25 to 12:30 pm	Member state declarations from the floor
12:30 to 12:40 pm	Closing remarks <b>H.E. Doreen Sefuke Mwamba</b> , Minister of Community Development and Social Services (Zambia)

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Permanent Mission of Burkina Faso: Odette Niamba,  
[odetteniamba@burkina-onu.org](mailto:odetteniamba@burkina-onu.org) ; Cell: +1 929 240 5755.