

FORUM: Sustainable Development Commission (Sub-commission 2)

QUESTION OF: Measures to delay the age of first pregnancy as a means of improving maternal health

SUBMITTED BY: Chad

CO-SUBMITTERS: Kenya, Tonga, Moldova, Mongolia, UNICEF, Algeria, Denmark, Nigeria, Czech Republic, South Sudan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Peru, Myanmar, Holy See, WHO, Liechtenstein, Lebanon, Armenia, Seychelles, Switzerland, World Bank, Iraq, Cuba

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION,

Defining maternal health as the condition of women during their pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period,

Aware that women face social backlash should they choose to abort safely via public services,

Noting that, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), 10% of the girls from low and medium-income countries become pregnant at the age of 16 and mothers aged between 10 and 19 years account for 11% of all births worldwide,

Noting with deep concern that at least 16 million girls - between ages 15 to 19 - give birth each year and that the process is the leading cause of death for this age group across the world,

Underlining that delaying a first pregnancy until a woman is at least 18 years old is healthiest for both the mother and the baby,

Bearing in mind that along with the girls' physical health, their mental/emotional health is also in jeopardy due to a situation greatly beyond their mental maturity and their bodies abilities,

Recognizing that young women who give birth to their first child are more susceptible to diseases which lead to actual problems,

Noticing that women often have health issues in times of postpartum because they have no access to skilled labour and emergency care,

1. Suggests that all member states implement Education Outreach Programmes (EOPs), working alongside regional Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), in order to establish United Nations-affiliated schools, that offer free tuition, in LEDCs with the aim of increasing education opportunities for children to reduce early pregnancies:
 - a) enrollment will be gender-blind, and will prioritize children from poverty-stricken backgrounds
 - b) these schools will offer national curricula, relevant to current domestic and international economic prospects, to ensure best employment prospects
 - c) locations of these schools will be determined by a panel of United Nations experts, that will determine this on a need basis, choosing areas while taking into account various factors
 - d) governments can incentivize parents to send their children to the schools by developing microfinance programmes and priority healthcare access
 - e) introducing Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) as a mandatory part of these schools' curriculum;
2. Recommends that all member states introduce rigorous awareness schemes, as part of the EOPs, throughout the country aimed at young couples to notify them of risks involved in early pregnancies, using methods such as, but not limited to:
 - a) involving NGOs to communicate with these populations about topics such as possible detrimental effects of childbirth on mothers, chances of infant and maternal mortality
 - b) emphasizing the positive consequences for the country's demography and development,

- such as reduction of mortality rates and improving long-term health conditions
- c) addressing the literate with awareness campaigns such as social media and digital campaigns, print advertisements and celebrity endorsements;

3. Urges LEDC governments to implement a sustainable domestic employment scheme, as detailed in Sustainable Development Goal #8, with the aim of increasing employment opportunities for men and women after formal education, by:
 - a) commissioning the development of large-scale infrastructure projects, with monetary aid in the form of foreign investments
 - b) imposing stringent regulations regarding the treatment of workers to prevent injustices like discrimination and sexual harassment
 - c) taking loans from other countries or the IMF at nominal rates with the aim of providing subsidies to local industries for economic development, as well as working with other member states to ensure:
 - i. multilateral trade agreements, especially with neighbouring countries
 - ii. direct foreign investments, that can boost employment as well as industries like tourism
 - iii. improved working conditions in industries, which could lead to an increase in productivity and employment
 - iv. strengthening of primary sector industries, which could lead to increased exports and economic growth;
4. Encourages governments to cooperate with the World Health Organisation (WHO) in setting up a comprehensive network of health facilities across the country, aimed at providing necessary healthcare for mothers and children by implementing policies such as, but not limited to:
 - a) constructing nursing homes / small hospitals at accessible locations in rural areas
 - b) ensuring that these health centres cater to the basic humanitarian needs of the patients, such as adequate food, water and shelter
 - c) employing skilled therapists and counsellors that will help young mothers with rehabilitation and overcoming psychological and physical trauma that may have been caused during the procedure
 - d) providing free residence and access to facilities for mothers who are about to give birth, and have trained doctors who will assist with delivery
 - e) quality of life and facilities at these centres will be rigorously monitored by UN-appointed officials through random spot checks;
5. Requests nations to implement education programmes directed at girls and women, in order to help raise them out of poverty and danger of forced, early marriage, through methods such as, but not limited to:
 - a) providing incentives to families to encourage participation of girls in educational programmes through NGOs
 - b) providing shelter and housing facilities for girls who may face ostracization for rebelling against societal norms
 - c) carrying out awareness campaigns to educate families in areas with prevalent child marriage about the ills of child marriage, and socio-economic benefits of providing education and employment opportunities to young girls
 - d) developing support networks and free legal aid facilities for girls looking to avoid child marriages
 - e) ensuring that official and authentic documentation is provided to authorities after a marriage to prove that the married individuals are not minors
 - f) community-based monitoring measures to detect and report child marriages
 - g) strict legal action against families that participate in child marriage.