ECOWAS Roadmap On Prevention and Response To Child Marriage

(2019 - 2030)

Cape Verde

Senegal

The Gambia

Guinea-Bissau

Guinea

Sierra Leone

Liberia

Côte d'Ivoire

Mali

Burkina Faso

Benin

Togo

Ghana

Niger

Nigeria

ECOWAS COMMISSION
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ECOWAS Roadmap On Prevention and Response To Child Marriage

(2019 - 2030)

January 2019

101 Yakubu Gowon Crescent
Asokoro District, P.M.B. 401
Abuja-Nigeria

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In response to the high prevalent rate of Child Marriage in West Africa, the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS Member States approved the ECOWAS Roadmap on Prevention and Response to Child Marriage (2019 - 2030) in June 2019 as a strategic framework to guide National Governments to prioritize, mobilize and allocate necessary resources to prevent and respond to Child Marriage in the region.

This Roadmap is the outcome of the commitment, perseverance and dedication of a number of individuals from the ECOWAS Commission, Member States and Partners. First, I want to acknowledge the Commissioner, Department of Social Affairs and Gender, ECOWAS Commission, Dr. Siga Fatima Jagne; whose exemplary leadership and political commitment to the realization of the rights of the children of the region enabled the development and adoption of the Roadmap. My gratitude also goes to all the ECOWAS staff that had contributed in different ways to this laudable achievement.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all our partners in general whose unwavering support deserves mention, especially the Plan International who supported the drafting of the Roadmap and also provided support for the convening of the CSO Consultation and participated actively during the ECOWAS Commission hosted Experts Meeting prior to the adoption by Ministers. ECOWAS invites all partners to continue to support the popularization of the Roadmap and advocacy for its implementation by Member states.

I would also like to commend the efforts of Civil Society Organizations and Member States Experts who by their comments and observations throughout the processes of development and adoption subjected the Roadmap to rigorous quality control.

This Roadmap is one of the giant steps that builds on previous efforts towards creating an ECOWAS region which respects and values every child, and works towards the realization of the full potential and well-being of all children. This Roadmap with a life span of about ten years for active implementation, provides the normative framework and practical guidance for the prevention and response to Child Marriage in both non-emergency and emergency situations like the current COVID-19 Pandemic.

Dr. Sintiki Tarfa UGBE
Director, Humanitarian and Social Affairs,
ECOWAS Commission.

FOREWORD

The creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) heralded a concretization of the aspirations of the peoples of West Africa for a much brighter future. This prosperity was to be propelled by economic integration. This lofty vision has, in its interpretation, been expanded to fully account for the realization of the human rights and human security of all West African citizens. A serious obstacle in the short, through the medium to the long term in realizing this vision is the menace of child marriage.

Child marriage is a developmental challenge and human rights violation with monumental consequences to the child (the majority being girls). Its impacts include derailment of efforts to eradicate poverty, increased fertility and population growth and puts the child at increased risk of intimate partner violence and sexually transmitted diseases. It also results in the loss of educational opportunities. For girls, additional risks include death during childbirth, obstetric fistula and a plethora of other health consequences. The costs of child marriage in strategic terms might be much higher than even commonly imagined. Without necessarily arguing causation, clearly there appears to be a correlation between societies with high levels of child marriage and the rise of terrorist insurgencies and overall instability. Perhaps an explanation for this resides with the fact that child marriage, all but guarantees intergenerational poverty, hopelessness and greater susceptibility to violent radicalization.

The adoption of the Road Map for Preventing and Responding to Child Marriage and the Political Declaration and Common Position on Child Marriage in 2019 by ECOWAS Heads of States signposts a renewal of efforts and recommitment to the goal of ending child marriage in the ECOWAS region. The Road Map sets out key strategies in the areas of strengthening Legal and Policy Frameworks, mobilizing and engaging with communities towards changing social norms, promoting increased access to education, health and other support services and ensuring effective coordination, reporting, M&E and accountability. Beyond these strategic pathways indicated in the Roadmap, we must emphasize the stimulation of political and wider societal commitment to championing the rights of all children and the rights of the girl child in particular.

ECOWAS recognises this and as such emphasizes that the work on ending child marriage must be undertaken in full recognition of other existing normative and programmatic instruments of ECOWAS and existing child rights and child protection assets. Noteworthy are the ECOWAS Child Policy (2019 - 2030) which serves as the umbrella instrument for all work in promoting the rights of the child and the Strategic Framework for Strengthening National Child Protection Systems adopted in 2017. The Strategic Framework identifies Child Marriage as one of the 5 key priorities for immediate attention and response while obligating Member States to rapidly strengthen Child Protection Systems over the medium to long term.

It is of critical importance that all hands are on deck in stamping out child marriage in our region. To this end a 'whole of state and society', approach is imperative. This means in concrete terms that the State and Non State entities (Civil Society, the Private Sector, Faith Institutions, Local Communities, the Media, Women and

Men's Groups and Organizations etc.) must all be fully mobilized in this cause. This must be achieved right across the strategic implementation levels of the family, the local community, sub-national entities, the State and Regional levels.

I therefore commend this document to all readers as a call to arm in defence of our children and in charting a brighter future for our region.

Dr. Siga Fatima Jagne,
Commissioner Social Affairs and Gender
ECOWAS Commission

March 2020.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Preamble

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established on May 28, 1975 through the Lagos Treaty. ECOWAS is a 15-member regional group with a mandate of promoting economic integration in all fields of activity of the constituting countries. Member countries making up ECOWAS are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo.

Definition of a Child

The ECOWAS Child Policy, African Union and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines any person below the age of 18 years as a child. Thus, child marriage is any formal or informal union where one or both of the parties are under 18 years of age. Child marriage includes every legal, traditional or religious based union involving a boy and a girl under 18 years old. To the extent that no person under 18 years old is able to give his/her free and full consent, child marriage is considered as forced marriage. Although boys are also included in the term "child marriage", girls are disproportionately the most affected and form a majority of children-spouses.

Instruments on Child Marriage

At the global, African regional, ECOWAS sub-regional levels and most of the countries have instruments against child marriage. The legal nature and enforcement of these instruments vary from one Member state to the other. Child Marriage is therefore addressed in many national laws and instruments in ECOWAS Member States. This ECOWAS Roadmap on Prevention and Response to Child Marriage in the region therefore aligns with broader international, regional and national initiatives. It also builds on past and current initiatives going on within the ECOWAS region.

Prevalence of Child Marriage

Child Marriage occurs across the world, albeit it is more widespread in the developing countries. West and Central Africa have the highest rate of child marriage in the world. The analysis of trends over time shows that while child marriage has been historically decreasing in ECOWAS in percentage terms, the number of child brides has been increasing from 4 to 6 million and is projected to increase to 12 million in 2030, if the observed decline in percentage terms continues. The reason behind this increase in terms of number of child brides relates to the demographic trends of increasing population in ECOWAS. Although the percentage of girls getting married before 18 is decreasing, the number of girls

in this age group has been hugely increasing in the last decades in the ECOWAS region and the trend is projected to continue from now to 2030 and beyond.

Drivers of Child Marriage in ECOWAS Region

Child marriage is indeed a complex practice with multiple causes. It takes different forms and has similarities across the sub-region. The causes vary according to the sociological realities of each country. On the basis of the similarities identified from one country to another it can be taken that the causes are related to (i) the existence of multiple and often conflicting legal framework – plurality of laws such as national, customary and religious laws relating to marriage; (ii) low educational attainment and lack of good quality education; (iii) gender inequalities; (iv) protection of family honour (v) poverty and low socio-economic environment; (vii) traditional and religious norms and beliefs and (vii) humanitarian crisis and conflict situations (viii) paucity of birth registration

Consequences of child marriage: Child marriage is a human rights violation and a national development issue that hampers efforts to eradicate poverty, has a large impact on fertility and populationi growth and puts the child at increased risk of intimate partner violence, sexually transmitted diseases and losing educational opportunities. For girls, additional risks include death during childbirth, obstetric fistula and many other health consequences.

Child Marriage negatively affects key components of children's lives, their communities and countries. It also has impacts on:

➢ The psychosocial well-being of the child.

➢ Health and Nutrition status of the child.

➢ Education and economic empowerment of the child.

➢ Population Growth and Demographic Dividend.

➢ Economic Costs: Child marriage also comes with very large associated economic costs.

➢ Intergenerational Cycle of Poverty: Girls who marry early are likely to be from poor families and they themselves are likely to be poor due to their lower educational levels and limited opportunities for decent employment. Their children may also be brought up in resource constrained situations and most likely will become poor. Poverty does contribute to the practise of child marriage and child marriage most often also leads to a life of poverty. Thus, poverty is being passed from one generation to another.

Road Map on Prevention and Response to Child Marriage in ECOWAS Region

Several initiatives have been taken at the international, continental, regional, national and local spheres to prevent and eliminate child marriage. The overarching goal of the Road Map is to end Child Marriage in the ECOWAS

Region. The roadmap is a programming tool for priority actions on ending child marriage to be implemented over a period of ten years. The vision is to have an ECOWAS region without child marriage, where girls and boys have equal opportunities and can reach their full potentials in all aspects of their lives. To protect children from Child Marriage and its negative consequences, ECOWAS has an approach that is based on the broad strategies below (ECOWAS, 2017):

- Strengthen Legal and Policy Frameworks;
- Mobilize and Engage Communities towards social norms change;
- Promote increased access to education, health and other support services;
- Ensure Effective Coordination, Reporting, M & E and Accountability Mechanisms.

The Strategies and Key priority Areas Identified for Intervention are:

1. Establish, implement and enforce laws and policies to prevent child marriage and support victims of child marriage;

2. Inclusion and participation of children and the youth in initiatives to end child marriage;

3. Involvement and Engagement of traditional and religious leaders;

4. Social behavioural change, awareness and use of communication and media to sensitise and amplify voices;

5. Access to formal and informal education, support services and economic opportunities;

6. Access to services for victims of child marriage;

7. Coordination and monitoring of national/regional implementation and follow up.

Time Frame

The road map will be in operation for a period of ten years. Three time frameworks are adopted as stated below:

Short Term	-	0 to 3 years
Medium Term	-	4 to 6 years
Long Term	-	7 to 10 years

Roadmap Matrix: Each of the Strategic Area is translated into a Strategic Objective with associated key activities, indicators, sources of verification, those responsible for action and time framework for action.

The last section deals with implementation guidelines.

x

TABLE OF CONTENT

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACDS:	African Center for Disaster Studies
CARMMA:	Campaign on Accelerated Reduction on Maternal Mortality in Africa
DHS:	Demographic and Health Surveys
DSAG:	Department of Social Affair and Gender
ECCAS:	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS:	Economic Community of West African States
EGDC:	ECOWAS Gender and Development Center
EU:	European Union
FAWE:	Forum for African Women Educationalists
HIV/AIDS:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
HLPF:	High Level Political Forum on sustainable development
ICRW:	International Center for Research on Women
MoU:	Memorandum of Understanding
NEPAD:	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD:	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
RCPWG:	Regional Child Protection Working Group
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA:	Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency
UN WOMEN:	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO:	United Nations for Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNODC:	United Nations Office against Drug and Crime
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
WACSOF:	West African Civil Society Forum
WB:	World Bank
WHO:	World Health Organization
WiLDAF:	Women in Law in Development in Africa

1. INTRODUCTION

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established on May 28, 1975 through the Lagos Treaty. ECOWAS is a 15-member regional group with a mandate of promoting economic integration in all fields of activity of the constituting countries. Member countries making up ECOWAS are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo. ECOWAS covers an area of 5,114,162 km2 with a population of 349,154,000 inhabitants according to 2015 estimates. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) treaty Article 4 guarantees the fundamental principle of human rights as follows: *"recognition, promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights in accordance with the provision of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights"*. Article 61 of the same Treaty defines the scope of work of its Commission of Social Affairs as follows: *"Member States undertake to cooperate with a view to mobilizing the various sections of the population and ensuring their effective integration and involvement in the social development of the region"[i].*

1.1 Definition of Child Marriage

The ECOWAS Child Policy, African Union and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines any person below the age of 18 years as a child. Thus, child marriage is any formal or informal union where one or both of the parties are under 18 years of age. Child marriage includes every legal, traditional or religious based union involving a boy and a girl under 18 years old. To the extent that no person under 18 years old is able to give his/her free and full consent, child marriage is considered as forced marriage. Although boys are also included in the term "child marriage", girls are disproportionately the most affected and form a majority of children-spouses[ii] .

1.2 ECOWAS Instruments Relating to Ending Child Marriage

ECOWAS has developed many instruments to protect vulnerable groups, including children and women and those relating to ending child marriage including the following:

➢ ECOWAS Child Policy and Strategic Plan of Action [iii].

➢ ECOWAS Supplementary Act on equal rights between women and men for sustainable development in the ECOWAS region[iv]. Article 7:1 of the Supplementary Act states "*that Member States shall enact and adopt, in accordance with their constitutions, appropriate legislative, administrative and regulatory measures to ensure that women and men enjoy equal rights and are considered equal partners in marriage".* Furthermore, Article 7:2, states that Member States: "(*a) ensure that every marriage takes place with the free and full consent of the man and woman concerned; (b) agree to fix the minimum age of*

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[i] ECOWAS Treaty (1993)
[ii] ECOWAS (2017)
[iii] ECOWAS (2008)
[iv] ECOWAS (2015)

marriage for all persons at 18 years of age; (c) require that every marriage, including a civil, customary and religious marriage, be registered in accordance with national laws; (d) guarantee that, during their marriage, the spouses will have the reciprocal rights and obligations towards their children, whose taking into account of the interest is always paramount". In addition, Article 26.1 of the same Act states that *"Member States shall take appropriate measures to review customary norms, including social, economic, cultural and political practices, as well as religious beliefs, which legitimize and accentuate the persistence and tolerance of gender-based violence, to punish them and expose their misdeeds in society, including through awareness campaigns".*

ECOWAS, in collaboration with the West African Regional Working Group on Child Protection, has also developed the ECOWAS Strategic Framework for Strengthening National Child Protection Systems to Prevent and Respond to Violence, Abuse and child exploitation in West Africa. This framework presents the situation of child marriage in the ECOWAS region and has defined not only the strategies but also the expected outcomes for Strengthening National Child Protection Systems, of which child marriage is a component. This framework is the bedrock on which this roadmap for the prevention and elimination of child marriage in the ECOWAS region will be built[v].

1.3 African Regional Level Instruments

Child marriage is a violation of the girl's human rights and it limits and curtails her socio-psychological and economic development. Many African human rights instruments advocate against child marriage. Such instruments include:

> ➢ The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Article 21:2)
>
> "*Child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys shall be prohibited and effective action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify the minimum age of marriage to be 18 years and make registration of all marriages in an official registry compulsory"*[vi].
>
> ➢ Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; Article 6 a & b, state that *"a) no marriage shall take place without the free and full consent of both parties; b) the minimum age of marriage for women shall be 18 years*;"[vii].
>
> ➢ The African Youth Charter Article 8: Protection of the Family "1*. The family, as the most basic social institution, shall enjoy the full protection and support of States Parties for its establishment and development noting that the structure and form of families varies in different social and cultural contexts. 2. Young men and women of full age who enter into marriage shall do so based on their free consent and shall enjoy equal rights and responsibilities"*[viii].

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[v]   ECOWAS (2017)
[vi] Organisation of African Unity (1990)
[vii] African Union (2003)
[viii] African Union (2006)

African Youth Charter Article 23: "*Girls and Young Women States Parties acknowledge the need to eliminate discrimination against girls and young women according to obligations stipulated in various international, regional and national human rights conventions and instruments designed to protect and promote women's rights. In this regard, they shall: a) Introduce legislative measures that eliminate all forms of discrimination against girls and young women and ensure their human rights and fundamental freedoms; b) Ensure that girls and young women are able to participate actively, equally and effectively with boys at all levels of social, educational, economic, political, cultural, civic life and leadership as well as scientific endeavours;"*[ix]

➢ African Common Position on the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa: In June 2015, all African Union Member States endorsed a Common African Position to End Child Marriage. The importance of ending child marriage is also recognized in the AU Agenda 2063, the 50 years' vision for the development of the continent[x].

1.4 United Nations Conventions and Sustainable Development Goals Relating to Child Marriage

They relate to:

➢ United Nations Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages;

➢ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 24:3 *"States Parties shall take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children"*[xi].

➢ Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 16(2) – "Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouse"[xii].

➢ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 23(3) - "No marriage shall be entered into without the free and full consent of the intending spouses"[xiii]

➢ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women Article 16 says *"States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: [...] The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory"*[xiv].

[ix] ibid
[x] African Union (2015)
[xi] United Nations (199)
[xii] United Nations (1948)
[xiii] United Nations (1966)
[xiv] United Nations (1979)

- ➤ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - World leaders, including ECOWAS Member States, committed in 2015 to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of a broad agenda, comprising of 17 Goals and 169 targets to be delivered by 2030. SDG Target 5.3 aims to "eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage". Furthermore, ending child marriage will contribute to achieving a half of the SDG Goals (Girls Not Brides, 2018) such as:(i) Goal 1: No Poverty – Children who get married are likely to be from poor households and to remain poor even after the marriage; (ii) Goal 2: Zero Hunger; (iii) Goal 3: Good Health and Wellbeing; (iv) Goal 4: Inclusive and Quality Education; (v) Goal 5: Gender Equality; (vi) Goal 8: Economic Growth; (vii) Goal 10: Reduce Inequalities; (viii) Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions [xv].

Child Marriage is also addressed in many national laws in ECOWAS Member States. This ECOWAS Roadmap on Prevention and Response to Child Marriage in the region therefore aligns with broader international and regional initiatives. It also builds on past and current initiatives going on within the ECOWAS region.

2. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF CHILD MARRIAGE IN ECOWAS REGION

Child Marriage occurs across the world, albeit it is more widespread in the developing countries. West and Central Africa have the highest rate of child marriage in the world - six out of the ten countries with highest rates of child marriage are in the West and Central Africa region[xvi]. Child marriage is a grave violation of the human rights of the girl-child, which has consequences for her overall well-being – socially, mentally, and in terms of physical health. Even though child marriage is also a term that applies to boys, however overwhelmingly pre-dominantly, girls are the most affected [xvii].

According to the African Union Campaign on ending child marriage[xviii]:

- ➤ Each year, 12 million girls are married before the age of 18. That is 23 girls every minute and 1 in every 2 seconds

- ➤ Child marriage happens across countries, cultures and religions

- ➤ Child marriage is the result of a broad combination of structural and socio-cultural drivers. These include: poverty; lack of educational and economic opportunities; social expectations of behavior; discrimination against girls and women and restrictive gender roles; beliefs about protection of girls; and low awareness of and access to alternatives.

- ➤ Child marriage looks different from one community to another one. Therefore, solutions must be contextualized

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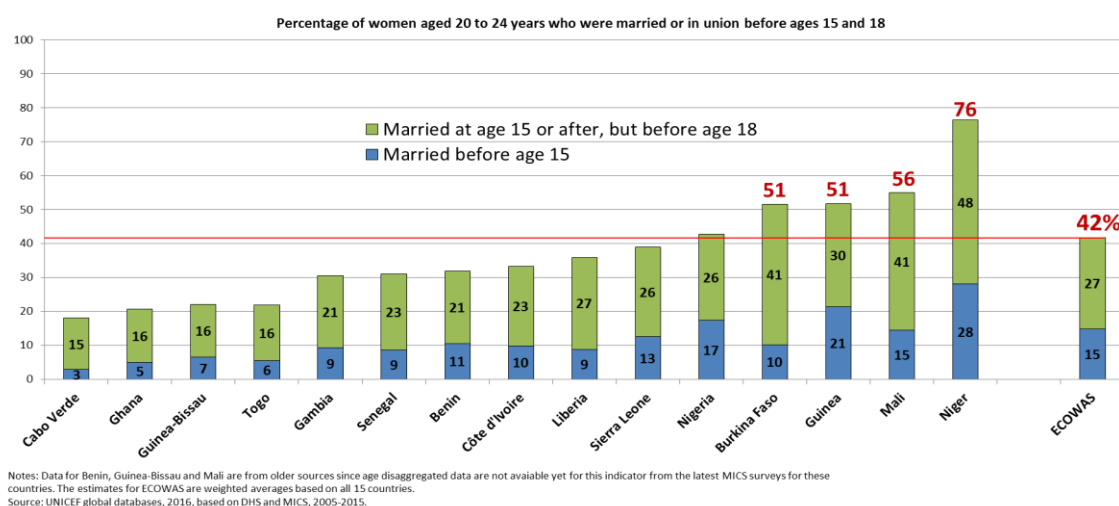[xv] United Nations (2015)
[xvi] UNICEF (2014)
[xvii] ICRW and UNICEF 2015).
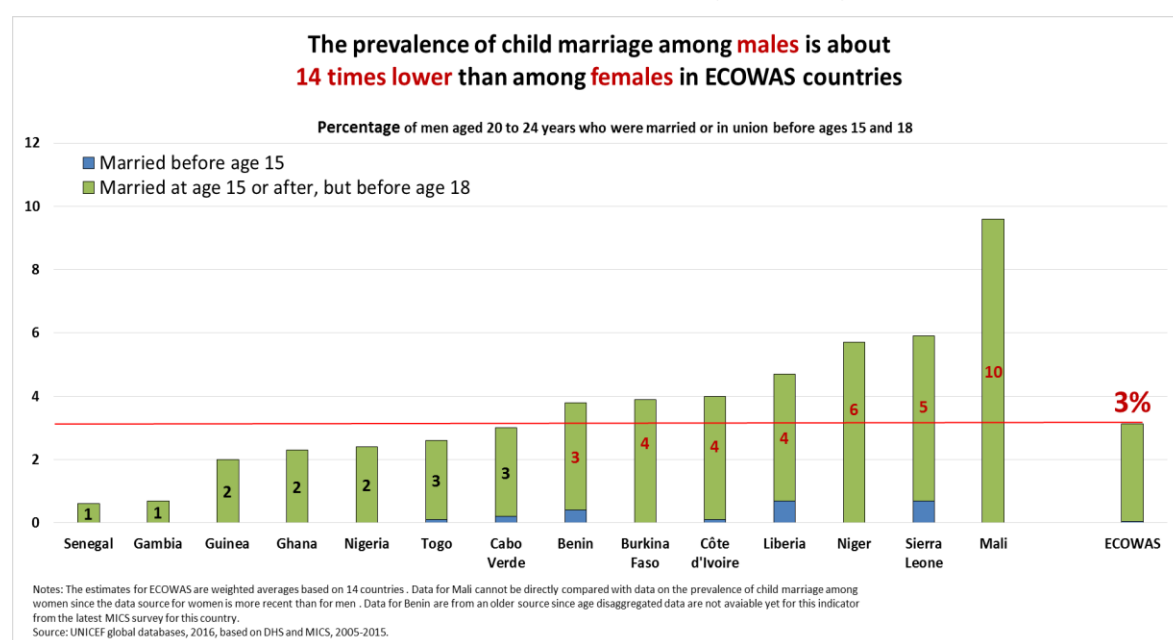[xviii] African Union (2015)

2.1 Key Data on child marriage in ECOWAS region

The prevalence of child marriage in ECOWAS is **42% among girls and 3% among boys**. In the Republic of Niger three girls out of four get married before 18. The prevalence of child marriage before 15 years of age is on average 15% within the ECOWAS region with a peak of 28% (more than a girl out of four) in Niger [xix].

Around 4 in 10 young women in ECOWAS countries were married as children

Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Notes: Data for Benin, Guinea-Bissau and Mali are from older sources since age disaggregated data are not avaiable yet for this indicator from the latest MICS surveys for these countries. The estimates for ECOWAS are weighted averages based on all 15 countries.
Source: UNICEF global databases, 2016, based on DHS and MICS, 2005-2015.

The prevalence of child marriage among boys is **14 times lower than among girls;** however, in some countries like Mali, child marriage among boys reaches 10%.

The prevalence of child marriage among males is about 14 times lower than among females in ECOWAS countries

Percentage of men aged 20 to 24 years who were married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Notes: The estimates for ECOWAS are weighted averages based on 14 countries . Data for Mali cannot be directly compared with data on the prevalence of child marriage among women since the data source for women is more recent than for men . Data for Benin are from an older source since age disaggregated data are not avaiable yet for this indicator from the latest MICS survey for this country.
Source: UNICEF global databases, 2016, based on DHS and MICS, 2005-2015.

The analysis of trends over time shows that while child marriage has been historically decreasing in ECOWAS in percentage terms, the number of child brides has been increasing from 4 to 6 million and is projected to increase to 12 million in 2030, if the observed decline in percentage terms continues. The reason behind this increase in terms of number of child brides relates to the demographic trends of increasing population in ECOWAS. Although the percentage of girls getting married before 18 is

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[xix] UNICEF (2016)

decreasing, the number of girls in this age group has been hugely increasing in the last decades in the ECOWAS region and the trend is projected to continue from now to 2030 and beyond.
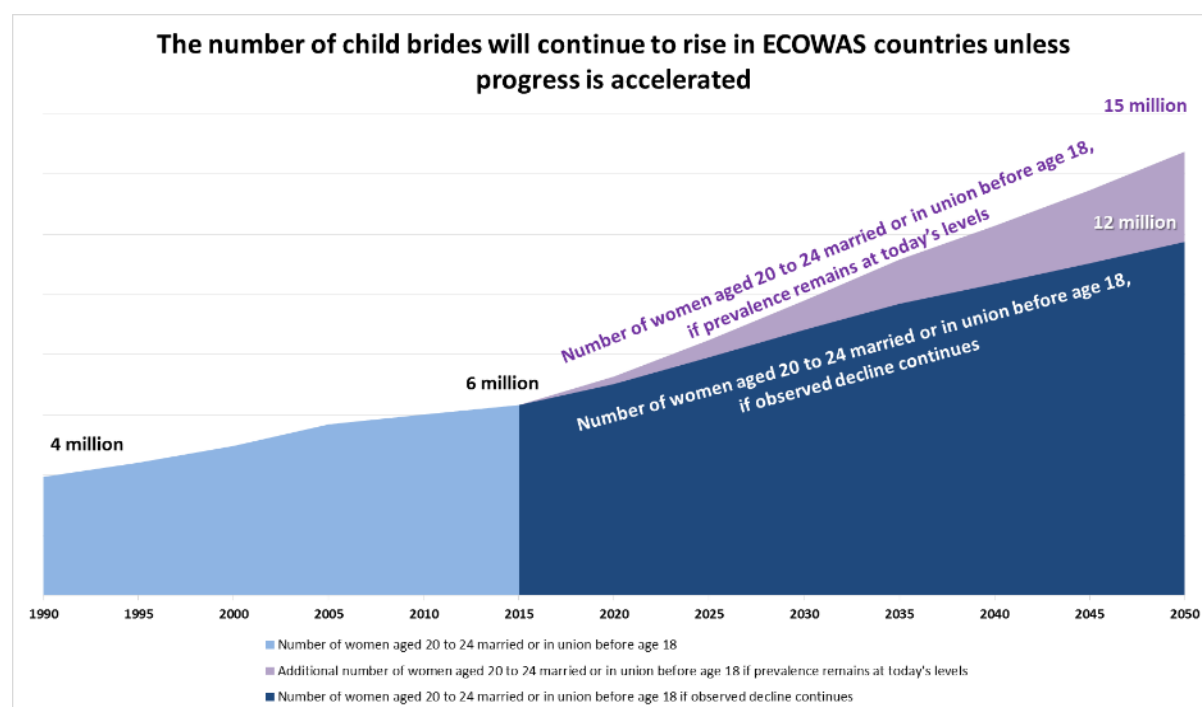
2.2 Drivers of Child Marriage in ECOWAS Region

Child marriage is indeed a complex practice with multiple causes. It takes different forms and has similarities across the sub-region. Some of these factors include:

> *Gender Inequalities:* Gender inequality contributes not only to the pervasiveness of violence against girls, including child marriage, but further to its acceptance in many communities. Gender inequalities are reflected in the situation whereby many families favour investments in their male children than female children. The emphasis is often put on their roles as wives and mothers to be and excluding them from decisions about themselves, their families and the community. Female socialisation processes reinforce the low status of women and girls *vis a vis* that of men and boys [xx].

> *Need to Protect Family Honour:* In the traditional community marriage is highly valued and confers significant prestige and enhances the status of the girl and her family in the community. Virginity at marriage is also highly valued and the fear of girls losing their virginity before marriage and pre-marital pregnancy influence the perceptions that girls need to get married early. *"This fear tends to be associated with shame and dishonour more than the risks to the young girls' health. These traditional perceptions and practices are strongly rooted in gendered norms"* [xxi].

[xx] PLAN International (2014)
[xxi] PLAN International (2014)

➢ **_Religious and Cultural norms:_** Child marriage occurs across all religions, however Islamic countries and communities with a Muslim majority tend to have higher child marriage rates[xxii]. Community and religious leaders, without whom traditional weddings cannot be celebrated, may overlook violations of the minimum age[xxiii]. Furthermore, traditional and Islamic norms allow a man to marry more than one wife. This situation leads to a child being married to older men who already have other wives.

➢ **_Poverty and low socio-economic environment:_** According to Ford Foundation the leading correlate for child marriage in West Africa is poverty. Poverty is the driving factor for poor parents to perceive their children as economic burdens, to see school fees as prohibitive and to view their girls as a source of wealth through taking of bride price and marrying to older supposedly rich men [xxiv]. Poverty affects child marriage both as a cumulative condition and a 'shock' or sudden economic hardship. Across the region, the poorest women tend to be the youngest to marry[xxv]. Marriage is also perceived as a way out of poverty for the girl especially in case of transnational early marriages [xxvi]. At an aggregate level, girls from wealthier families tend to marry later[xxvii]. Many studies have found out that many young women aged between 20 to 24 in nearly all countries are more likely to have been married before 18 years if they have little or no education, live in a rural area and are poorer. The rural areas are characterized with high levels of poverty, hence many women do not see viable alternatives to child marriage within their environment. Furthermore, it is believed that the girls will be married away from the family, so investments in their education are often not of high priority in poor families. Many poor families therefore marry out their daughters to ease financial burdens, for wealth acquisition thought the payment of bride price and to form linkages and alliances with other families. Child marriages are typically higher in rural areas than urban areas due to higher retention of traditional norms, less available opportunities, narrower range of life options, stronger community networks, less number of role models and higher levels of poverty[xxviii]. Loss of parents, guardians or significant others due to HIV/AIDS can also make girls to be quite vulnerable to child marriage. Economic and other shocks which lead to economic disempowerment of the parents also make the girls vulnerable to child marriage.

➢ **_Humanitarian Crisis and Conflict Situations:_** A UNICEF study has indicated a correlation between economic crisis and increases in child marriage rates by groups who do not usually practice child marriage[xxix]. Fragility, conflict, climate change and disasters put pressure on families' livelihoods and increases

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[xxii] ICRW (2014) cited in PLAN International (2014)
[xxiii] Boureima (2013)
[xxiv] Ford Foundation (2013)
[xxv] Jain & Kurz (2007); Okonofua (2013); Walker (2013)
[xxvi] ACP (2012)
[xxvii] ICRW (2014) cited in PLAN International (2014)
[xxviii] ICRW and UNICEF (2015).
[xxix] Assani (2000) cited in UNICEF (2001)

vulnerability. Nine of the ten countries with the highest rates of child marriage in the world appear on the 2013 OECD list of fragile states. Families experiencing conflict and various environmental crises, as well as forced displacements may marry their girls off in order to cope with the extreme situations and to protect them from the increased violence[xxx].

- > **Multiple and Conflicting Legal Frameworks:** Many research studies and reports emphasize problems caused by multiple and conflicting legislative framework: (i) different concurrent legal frameworks for marriage such as court marriage, religious and traditional marriage (ii) lack of knowledge of existing legislation. (iii) Laws have variances in terms of gender; in several countries the legal age of marriage for girls tends to be lower than that of boys. These problems do not necessarily drive child marriage but do contribute to its perpetuation.

- > **Birth Registration**: The paucity of birth registrations also acts as a significant hindrance to the implementation of national legislation, simply because this makes it difficult to determine a girl's age. In Niger, for example, the Constitution states that full consent of spouses is required for a marriage and provides for penalties in case of non-accordance, but the application is challenging in a context in which only 32% births are registered [xxxi].

- > **Low Educational attainment and low quality education:** Higher educational attainment is consistently connected in the literature with later age at first marriage: girls with no schooling marry earlier than girls with secondary or higher education[xxxii] . Education allows girls to see viable alternatives to child marriage. Lloyd and Mensch study of five French-speaking West African countries, found out that school and family factors are more critical for students dropping out of school, than child marriage. The confounding effect of access and quality of education is essential to assess the contribution of schooling to child marriage[xxxiii]. The quality of education and the school environment also affect children especially girl's retention and continuation within the school system. A study actually found out that girls get married often after leaving primary school. They are not motivated to continue further their education due to poor and discouraging learning outcomes, poor quality of teaching and unfriendly school environment[xxxiv]. Furthermore, although education is free by law in many countries, the hidden costs of schooling prevent many girls from enrolling and attending school regularly[xxxv].

Thus, child marriage is caused by multiple factors. The causes vary according to the sociological realities of each country. On the basis of the similarities identified from one country to another it can be taken that the causes are related to (i) the existence of multiple and often conflicting legal framework – plurality of laws such as national,

[xxx]   Girls Not Brides (2017)
[xxxi] UNICEF (2013)
[xxxii] Loaiza & Wong (2012)
[xxxiii] Lloyd and Mensch (2008)
[xxxiv] Ford Foundation (2013)
[xxxv] UNICEF (2012a) cited by Plan International (2015)

customary and religious laws relating to marriage; (ii) low educational attainment and lack of good quality education; (iii) gender inequalities; (iv) protection of family honour (v) poverty and low socio-economic environment; (vii) traditional and religious norms and beliefs and (vii) humanitarian crisis and conflict situations.

2.3 Consequences of child marriage

Child marriage is a human rights violation and a national development issue that hampers efforts to eradicate poverty, has a large impact on fertility and population growth and puts the child at increased risk of intimate partner violence, sexually transmitted diseases and losing educational opportunities. For girls, additional risks include death during childbirth, obstetric fistula and many other health consequences[xxxvi].

Child Marriage negatively affects key components of children's lives, their communities and countries as discussed below:

> ➤ *The psychosocial well-being:* forced child marriage does not allow children the space and time to make considered decisions for themselves on consent to sexual relations and freedom as they are isolated from other children and have to struggle with psychosocial and emotional consequences of their conjugal relation and obligations. Indeed, child marriage can itself be considered as one of many forms of violence experienced by women and girls across their lifespans. This violence is related to the lack of voice and agency young girls face when their marriage is decided by others and as such forced child marriage is translated into psychological violence. The imbalance of power between the child and her/his partner(s) also creates an environment conducive to sexual and physical abuse/intimate partner violence.

> ➤ *Health and Nutrition status:* Childbirth is highly likely within two years of marriage as such child marriage precipitates early pregnancy and motherhood in childhood[xxxvii]. Child marriage engenders negative health impacts on the girl-mothers themselves and their children - the child-mothers are at high risk of pregnancy-related death, miscarriage, child morbidity, obstetric fistula, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. In 2013, UNFPA reported that 70,000 adolescents in developing countries are at risk of dying from pregnancy related complications [xxxviii]. Besides the negative and possibly fatal consequences of female adolescent pregnancies, infants born to adolescent mothers are also 60 per cent more likely to die in their first year, and are more likely to be malnourished[xxxix]. Child brides are more likely to experience intimate partner violence especially due to the often wide age differentials between them and their husbands. Child marriage often accompanies early childbirths, indeed six out of seven early childbirths take place within the context of child marriage. Adolescents girls while giving birth face many serious health risks and these

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[xxxvi] Wodon et al (2017)

[xxxvii] Williamson (2013)

[xxxviii] UNFPA (2013)

[xxxix] UNFPA (2013)

risks extend beyond them to impact their children's health and nutrition negatively. Infant morbidity and mortality are higher amongst children born to mothers who are under 18 years. Furthermore, these children also face health risks of having low birth weight and poor nutritional status. Thus, children born to children-mothers are often stunted, which can lead to delayed physical development, poor cognitive skills which can later on affect their school performance, productivity and earnings in later life. Thus, ending child marriage with the associated early births can bring significant developmental and economic benefits to countries [xl].

➢ *Education and economic empowerment:* the circumstances generated by child marriage will hardly allow child spouses to go to school. Child marriage significantly affects girl's education level, illiteracy can be both a cause of child marriage and a consequence. For some girls, marriage means the end of education, they abandon ongoing education in order to prepare for the marriage and are taken out in order to "assume" their responsibilities in the conjugal household, including being a mother before their bodies are ready. Children born from less educated mothers have little probability of being sent to school. Due to lack of access to education and training, girls and women are most often found working in the most marginalized sectors of the informal economy, which reinforces the vicious cycle of poverty. They are exposed to greater risks (exploitation, abuse) and very low incomes. The most disadvantaged girls (living in rural areas or in crisis contexts, or living with a disability) have even less access to decent work. There are often gender norms that compel girls to comply with traditional practices which considers formal education as superfluous and improper for a married girl. The lack of education has a very negative impact not only on children who have been married, but also on society which loses valuable manpower and the opportunity to end the cycle of poverty.

➢ *Population Growth and Demographic Dividend:* Child brides start giving birth early and have longer exposure to being pregnant, thus they invariably have higher fertility rates which contribute to higher population growth. Thus, ending child marriage with the attendant early births can significantly reduce population growth. Lower population growth also provides more opportunities for countries to harness the demographic dividend.

➢ *Economic Costs:* Child marriage also comes with very large associated economic costs. A recent study, which includes several ECOWAS Member States in its analysis, looks at five domains of impact on: (i) fertility and population growth; (ii) health, nutrition, and violence; (iii) educational attainment and learning; (iv) labour force participation and earnings; and (v) participation, decision-making, and investments. When taken together across countries, child marriage will cost developing countries trillions of dollars by 2030, with the largest economic cost coming from its impact on fertility and population growth. In Nigeria, for example, and due in large part to the impact of child

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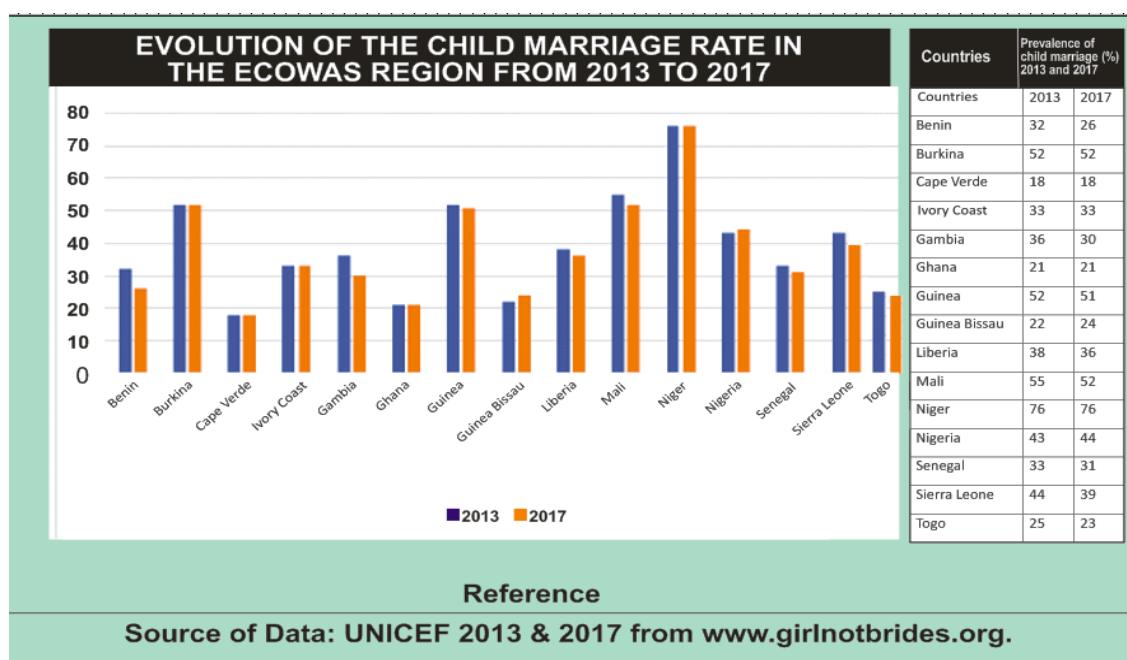[xl] Wodon, Onagoruwa and John (2017)

marriage on education, women who marry as children have, on average, earnings that are nine percent lower than if they had married later, this equals to $7.6 billion annually in lost earnings and productivity for the country[xli] .

➢ ***Intergenerational Cycle of Poverty:*** Girls who marry early are likely to be from poor families and they themselves are likely to be poor due to their lower educational levels and limited opportunities for decent employment. Their children may also be brought up in resource constrained situations and most likely will become poor. Poverty does contribute to the practise of child marriage and child marriage most often also leads to a life of poverty. Thus, poverty is being passed from one generation to another.

2.4 Persistence of child marriage practice within the Community

The decline in the rate of child marriage in the region has not been significant *(see table and chart below)*

Chart N^{O}1: Variations in the marriage rate of children in the ECOWAS Region

EVOLUTION OF THE CHILD MARRIAGE RATE IN THE ECOWAS REGION FROM 2013 TO 2017

Countries	Prevalence of child marriage (%) 2013 and 2017	
Countries	2013	2017
Benin	32	26
Burkina	52	52
Cape Verde	18	18
Ivory Coast	33	33
Gambia	36	30
Ghana	21	21
Guinea	52	51
Guinea Bissau	22	24
Liberia	38	36
Mali	55	52
Niger	76	76
Nigeria	43	44
Senegal	33	31
Sierra Leone	44	39
Togo	25	23

■2013 ■2017

Reference

Source of Data: UNICEF 2013 & 2017 from www.girlnotbrides.org.

Graph and Table 1: Produced base on the UNICEF database obtained on www.GirlsNotBrides.org

A Ford Foundation study, titled, "*Mapping Child Marriage In West Africa*" reveals that between 2000 and 2011, only three countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had made significant progress concerning the age for marriage (Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Senegal). Five countries had regressed towards an even younger marriage age (Cape Verde, Togo, Burkina Faso, Benin and

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[xli] PLAN International (2014)

Mauritania), while trends in four countries remained virtually unchanged (Ghana, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali)[xlii].

In the period selected for this study (2000 to 2011), Niger was already one of the countries with the highest rate of early marriage worldwide. Five years later, the rate of child marriage has remained unchanged in Niger (76%). The same is true for Burkina Faso (52%), which also kept a high rate of child marriage. Although low compared to other countries, marriage rates in Cape Verde (18%), Côte d'Ivoire (33%) and Ghana (21%) also remained unchanged. Sierra Leone (44% to 39%) fell by 5 points, Benin (32% to 26%) and Gambia (36% to 30%) by 6 points, Liberia (38% to 36%), Togo (25% to 23%) and Senegal (33% to 31%) by 2 points and Guinea (52% to 51%) by one point. Nigeria[xliii], on the other hand, has increased by one point (43% to 44%).

2.5 Initiatives to End Persistent Child Marriage Practice

Several initiatives have been taken at the international, continental, regional, national and local spheres to prevent and eliminate child marriage

2.5.1 *International Level*

Since 2015, there has been a renewed interest in the issue of child marriage and a growing desire to end the practice. At the international level, a target for the elimination of all forms of harmful practices, including child marriage, has been included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Two resolutions on Child Marriage, Early Marriage and Forced Marriage were also adopted by the UN General Assembly in July and November 2016[xliv].

In June 2017, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution recognizing the need to address child, early and forced marriage. This resolution was co-sponsored by five (05) ECOWAS countries: Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo[xlv].

2.5.2 *African Continental Level*

The African Union launched a campaign in 2014 to end early child marriage in Africa. This campaign has so far, involved eleven (11) ECOWAS countries that have actually committed to end to this practice. These countries are Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Gambia. The campaign is planned to keep running until 2023[xlvi].

In June 2015, all African Union Member States endorsed a Common African Position to End Child Marriage. The importance of ending child marriage is also recognized in the AU Agenda 2063, the 50 years' vision for the development of the continent. The political drive is also increasing at the national levels, with the implementation of national strategies and action plans on ending child marriage in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Nigeria with the development of national strategies in Senegal, Niger, and Sierra

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[xlii] Ford Foundation (2013)
[xliii] ECOWAS Commission (2017)
[xliv] Branson (2016)
[xlv] Girls Not Brides (2017)
[xlvi] UNICEF et al (2017)

Leone[xlvii]. The Heads of State and Government of French-speaking countries met on November 26 and 27 2016, in Antananarivo (Madagascar) for the 16th Summit of the Francophonie, and have positioned themselves to end child marriage by adopting a resolution listing nine (9) action points to end the practice[xlviii] .

In 2017 the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) issued a joint general comment on ending child marriage in Africa. The scope of their joint general comment "includes children in child marriages, children at risk of child marriage and women who were married before age of 18"[xlix]. In November, 2018, the 2nd African Union summit on ending child marriage was held in Accra, Ghana. The summit was a follow up on the first African Girls Summit whose objectives were - to examine the challenges on ending child marriage, sharing of experience and good practices at the country, regional and international levels. The 2nd African Girls Summit built on the first summit by looking at the progress on "commitments, interventions, measures and recommendations of keeping girls in school…"[l].

2.5.3 ECOWAS Regional Level

ECOWAS Commission has been involved in advocacy towards ending child marriage since 2013. ECOWAS has also adopted a strategic framework to strengthen national child protection systems and to protect children from violence. The framework identifies child marriage as one of the five priority areas for action.

Since 2010 the ECOWAS Gender and Development Center (EGDC) has initiated several programmes that are significantly contributing to child protection and the elimination of child marriage and other social and health problems affecting child development in the ECOWAS Member States. These include the scholarships of excellence Programme, which is aimed at providing financial support to brilliant but needy girls and boys in specialized technical and vocational education through the award of scholarships; and the obstetric fistula Programme through which women and girls suffering from obstetric fistula undergo surgical repair and are reintegrated socially and economically back into the society. The EGDC and UNFPA have elaborated an ECOWAS Regional Action Plan for Combating Obstetric Fistula in West Africa which was adopted by the ECOWAS Ministers responsible for gender and for health in 2015. Within the framework of this action plan, the EGDC organized a Summit of First Ladies of ECOWAS Member States in 2017, during which a high-level commitment was made to intensify the fight to eradicate obstetric fistula in the ECOWAS Region. Other child protection-related programmes initiated by the EGDC include the setting up of the West African Network of Young Female Leaders (ROAJELF), a partnership with the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights (UNHCHR) to address the issues of child marriage, child begging and child trafficking; and the involvement of young women in the implementation of the 50 Million Women

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[xlvii] Girls Not Brides (2016a)
[xlviii] Girls Not Brides (2016b)
[xlix] ACHPR and ACERW (2017)
[l] African Union (2018)

Speak Platform (50MWSP) project. Many First Ladies in ECOWAS Member States have also embarked on diverse initiatives within their countries towards ending child marriage.

Several other organisations and research institutions are engaged in studies to further elucidate the phenomenon. Other financial, technical and development partners have embarked on different innovative projects to end child marriage.

2.5.4 *Civil Society Organisations*

Civil Society Organizations - international and locally-based have also been taking diverse initiatives towards ending Child Marriage. Some Civil Society Organisations are also joining forces with others to form Coalition to end child marriage[li] .

2.5.5 *United Nations Agencies and Development Partners*

Many United Nations Agencies and Development Partners have scaled up their initiatives towards Ending Child Marriage. For instance, in 2016, UNFPA and UNICEF launched the Global Programme to Accelerate Action Against Child Marriage. This program targets twelve countries – four of these countries are ECOWAS Member States - Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger and Sierra Leone. The Programme focuses on (i) ensuring and promoting legislation and policies that protect and promote the rights of adolescent girls (ii) supporting families to show positive attitudes toward adolescent girls; (iii) promoting evidenced-based approach in the design of adolescent programs and policies and (iv) developing the skills and knowledge of girls who may be vulnerable to child marriage [lii].

2.6 **Lessons learnt in implementing initiatives to end child marriage**

While some successes have been recorded with state stakeholders in the region becoming more responsive to the concerted efforts at ending child marriage the following lessons are also highlighted in a study conducted by Girls Not Brides[liii].

i. **Government leadership and ownership** must be the starting point: the success of a national strategy depends primarily on the strength of a state's leadership, commitment, organization and capacity. Without strong leadership and political will, no effort to tackle child marriage in a multi-sectoral way can be implemented on a large scale.

ii. **Inclusive and participatory strategy** development processes to promote long-term impact

➢ An inclusive participatory process, including civil society and in particular women and young people, is needed to include important perspectives and grasp the complexity of the interventions needed to address child marriage.

[li] Girls Not Brides (2017)
[lii] UNICEF (2018)
[liii] Girls Not Brides (2016a)

> Such a process also contributes to a national movement to end child marriage, which is essential for longer-term sustainability.

> Two main approaches are identified to ensure a genuine participatory process: (i) Create a small working / advisory group composed of key experts from various organizations and sectors to provide technical expertise to the government steering committee; (ii) Consult a wider group of actors early in the strategy development process

iii. **Integrated, multi-sectoral responses are needed to end child marriage:** Ending child marriage requires multi-sectoral engagement; strategies for mobilizing different sectors should be integrated into strategies for ending child marriage. Integrating the prevention and response to child marriage across many sector (such as – education, health, economic growth, governance, agriculture, poverty alleviation, food security and nutrition, employment, youth programs, humanitarian crisis and conflict response programs, etc.) and into existing activities will both promote the goals of the activities as well as responding to the needs[liv].

iv. **Coordination and communication can help harmonize measures to end child marriage and maximize impact:** Strong collaboration and coordination as well as transparent communication can help harmonize sectors and actors. It avoids - duplication of effort, exclusion of different actors from processes and consultations, competition for funding opportunities for child marriage and confusion among actors.

v. **The content of national strategies should be evidence-based**: Research and evidence on the prevalence and context of child marriage, as well as solutions to address it, should inform national strategies and initiatives. Thus, national action plans and monitoring frameworks are considered essential for determining the scope of work and the consolidation efforts as well as the mechanisms for accountability.

vi. **International days are very useful opportunities to reinforce messages on social norm change towards ending child marriage:** Advantage should be taken of international days for related issues, such as international women's day, children's day, day of the girl child, etc. at global, continental and regional levels, to communicate, reiterate and reinforce social norm change on issues of ending child marriage.

In addition, the study by Ford Foundation identified a number of good practices that can be promoted towards ending child marriage in the West African Region. These good practices include[lv]:

i. Community participation through massive community mobilization, such as radio broadcasts;

ii. Precise targeting of parents or girls for grants;

[liv] Girls Not Brides and ICRW (2016)
[lv] Ford Foundation (2013)

iii.   Integrated programs for girls' education (providing safe spaces and school clubs for girls has proven to be a useful practice);

iv.   Involvement of religious and community leaders (including public statements by influential community leaders);

v.   Facilitation of school-work transition through skills enhancement;

vi.   Establishment/strengthening of youth-led or youth-friendly centers.

vii.   Incorporation of skills acquisition into mainstream schooling, and provision of literacy and vocational training to school leavers.

viii.   Clear coordination and leadership among NGO networks for the implementation of interventions on ending child marriage.

2.7 Theory of Change (attached)

The theory of change is a description in a flow chart form of how the change in this case ending child marriage is expected to be attained. The Theory of Change for this document therefore outlines the steps by which we hope to achieve the goal of ending child marriage in the ECOWAS Region.

3.   OVERARCHING GOAL OF THE ROADMAP

The overarching goal of the Road Map is to end Child Marriage in the ECOWAS Region. The roadmap is a programming tool for priority actions on ending child marriage to be implemented over a period of ten years. The vision is to have an ECOWAS region without child marriage, where girls and boys have equal opportunities and can reach their full potentials in all aspects of their lives.

4.   BROAD STRATEGIES TOWARDS ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE

To protect children from Child Marriage and its negative consequences, ECOWAS has an approach that is based on the broad strategies below [lvi].

Strategy 1: *Strengthen Legal and Policy and Frameworks* To create an environment conducive to protection of children from the violence generated by child marriage, it is crucial for ECOWAS Member States to set the minimum age of marriage to 18 years old for both girls and boys, thus prohibiting child marriage for any reason. National legislations should also include provisions that will allow law enforcement stakeholders to prosecute any individual organising or contracting a marriage with a child. The ECOWAS Member States are encouraged to establish or promote synergies and partnership between community members and elected representatives at national and sub national levels for strong advocacy against child marriage.

Strategy 2: *Mobilize and Engage Communities toward social norms change.* As the practice of child marriage is difficult to tackle due to its highly sensitive nature with

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[lvi] ECOWAS (2017)

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families and communities and its capacity to challenge the political and social structures, cultural attitudes and religious interpretations, ECOWAS Member States are encouraged to initiate long-term programmes that promote positive institutional and social change using a positive social norms perspective to generate community level discussion about gender inequality and child marriage as a harmful practice where many children face abuse and violence. Building the capacity of community, religious and cultural leaders and institutions to provide a platform for open discussion and public declarations in communities to end child marriage is needed.

Strategy 3: *Promote Increased access to education, health and other support services.* It is important for ECOWAS Member States to invest not only in primary education, but also in making secondary schools accessible in the immediate environment in order to provide children, especially girls, with technical skills that will help them to potentially access the labour market as well as preventing them to enter in marriage before the age of 18. Education will also equip children with knowledge that will consequently improve civil registration, vaccination, nutrition and prevention from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Compulsory and universal basic education in ECOWAS region should include both primary and secondary education. Out of school adolescents should be provided with alternative learning programmes or vocational training options. There should be increased access to safe and high quality formal and non-formal education for girls.

Strategy 4: *Ensure Effective Coordination, Reporting, M & E and Accountability Mechanisms.* It is important to coordinate and synergise all efforts in order to enhance effectiveness and efficiency. The implementation of the roadmap will also need to be continuously monitored and evaluated to ensure progress and maintain good focus and alignment on the goal of ending child marriage in the region.

5. STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS TO THE 2030 HORIZON

5.1 Key Interventions

1. Establish, implement and enforce laws and policies to prevent child marriage and support victims of child marriage.

2. Inclusion and participation of children and the youth in the initiatives to end child marriage.

3. Involvement and Engagement of traditional and religious leaders.

4. Social behavioural change, awareness and use of communication and media to sensitise and amplify voices.

5. Access to formal and informal education, support services and economic opportunities.

6. Access to services for victims of child marriage.

7. Coordination and monitoring of national/regional implementation and follow up.

5.2 Description of the Key Intervention Areas

5.2.1. *Establish, implement and enforce laws and policies to prevent child marriage and support victims of child marriage*

Strengthening the legal, policy and institutional frameworks will address issues related to the existence of competing legal frameworks on child and lack of knowledge of existing legislation in marriage in some Member States. Indeed, the national laws in force sometimes contrast with the signed international, continental and regional instruments. A need for proofreading to identify and correct legal inconsistencies for the adoption of new legal texts on child marriage is needed. In addition, following the launch of the African Union campaign in 2014 to end child marriage on the continent and the adoption by all member states of the "Common African Position to End Child Marriage" in June 2015, eleven (11) ECOWAS countries have actually engaged in the process of developing a national strategy to put an end to this phenomenon. This momentum deserves to be reinforced and raised with the four (04) Member States of ECOWAS which have not yet started the process.

5.2.2: *Inclusion and participation of children and the youth in initiatives to end child marriage*

The role of children and their peers as actors in preventing and eliminating child marriage is extremely important; ECOWAS and its Member States must ensure the participation of children and young people in coordination and decision-making mechanisms as well as in review and accountability processes. For example, this may result in the recognition of child-led groups as partners and actors in the implementation of the roadmap. Strengthening children's resilience, skills and participation will enable them to contribute to their protection as well as that of their peers [lvii]. "Measures will also be taken to identify and work with children and young people from vulnerable geographical areas / communities.

5.2.3: *Involvement and Engagement of traditional and religious leaders*

It will involve dialogues with traditional and religious leaders to promote and reinforce the social norms and practices that favor the elimination of child marriage. Partnerships will be established with religious and traditional leaders and their capacities will be strengthened to become allies in the implementation of actions for the elimination of child marriage. Open discussion platforms and public statements in the communities are among the activities planned for this purpose.

5.2.4: *Social behavioural change, awareness and use of communication and media to sensitise and amplify voices*

Steps will be taken to make better use of information technology tools and resources and innovations to educate communities about the dangers of child marriage. Traditional and non-traditional media will be used to organize events through which community and intergenerational dialogues that include girls, boys, women and men will be engaged on issues related to child marriage and gender in general. Grassroots

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[lvii] ECOWAS (2017)

community organizations as well as village agents will also be able to continue to raise awareness among families and near populations in view to adopt new attitudes towards girls.

5.2.5: *Access to formal and informal education, support services and economic opportunities*

Member States are encouraged to make adequate investments to make elementary and secondary schools attractive, secure and accessible in the immediate environment of students, girls in particular. In addition, it is expected that integrated and coordinated approaches including all school and community stakeholders will be developed to provide learners with an Essential Education and Action Package (EAPP) consisting of several services including births, immunization, nutrition and prevention of HIV / AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, life skills training and their application to gender issues, tutoring, evening classes for the benefit of girls supervised by student mothers, community-run school canteens, school health, school improvement / safety, child-to-child census, learning about rights and duties and protection of students, capacity building of teachers and pedagogical supervisors, training on the collection of school statistics, community and integrated supervision of young children through "child friendly spaces", community communication and capacity building, micro-credits to women's groups, women's literacy, community structures alert, capacity building of parents of students etc.

In sum, all services must make it possible to achieve the objectives of the universal compulsory basic education in ECOWAS countries (primary and secondary included) with the possibility that adolescents who are not enrolled in school have access to alternative learning programs or vocational training.

5.2.6. *Access to services for victims of child marriage*

This roadmap will also respond to the plight of victims of child marriage. Addressing child marriage provides a significant opportunity to work across the **child protection, gender, adolescent** areas in collaboration with **three key sectors: education, health, and social protection** to catalyse and accelerate results. It is expected that each country articulates a prioritized agenda to build an integrated and systematic programme response around which partners should rally to scale up action to reduce child marriage. This will involve shaping existing and emerging sectoral plans and service delivery platforms, making them more responsive to the rights and needs of married adolescent girls.

5.2.7. *Coordination and monitoring of national/regional implementation and follow up*

Child marriage is a complex phenomenon that has attracted a lot of interest at all levels of development. Available evidence shows that effective strategies to combat child marriage require inter-sectoral cooperation and integration. Thus, one of the major challenges would be: harmonization, consultation, and synergy.

To facilitate the governance and implementation of the roadmap, ECOWAS will work to promote a mechanism that could help to take advantage of the opportunities of the

multiplicity of actors and also of the transversality of child marriage in several sectors of activity. To this end, it is necessary that all key actors working for the elimination of child marriage as well as all relevant ECOWAS Institutions and Departments are involved. Thus, the coordination with African Union, ECOWAS Members States, United Nations Agencies, Development Partners, Regional Child Protection Groups, and other stakeholders will be taken into due cognizance and encouraged.

Moreover, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development lays great emphasis to the role of dialogue and review at the regional and sub-regional levels. Regional reviews-including peer learning and assessments of progress and policies-allows for the identification of overall trends, lessons learned, good practices, implementation gaps, and issues specific to a region, while helping to boost regional cooperation and partnerships. Regional reviews of progress can provide important inputs to support implementation efforts by countries of a region, as well as to report on progress and challenges at the global level- including to the UN High Level Political Forum of United Nations[lviii].

In addition, there will be the establishment of systems for collecting, centralizing and managing information on child marriage in the ECOWAS region in order to better monitor the implementation of the road map and pertinent decisions. Furthermore, the consolidation and dissemination of best practices, the preparation of periodic reports on the situation of child marriage, the dialogues between actors, the continuous learning and reflection sessions, the pursuit of advocacy activities are among others actions envisaged.

ECOWAS will facilitate and promote: (i) the effective leadership from the region in steering the roadmap; (ii) the implementation of guidelines adopted in terms of priorities and other sectoral policies; (iii) the transparency of the support; (iv) the mitigation of the risk of overlap of different supports; (v) that funding is mobilized and directed towards priorities set by the region; (vi) joint monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

[lviii] United Nations (2015)

6. ROADMAP MATRIX

Time Framework: The roadmap will be operational for ten (10) years.

Three time frames are adopted as indicated below (i) Short term - 0 to 3 years ;(ii) Medium term - 4 to 6 years and (iii) Long term - 7 to 10 years.

Strategic Objective 1: *Strengthen the legal, policy and institutional frameworks of ECOWAS Member States to reduce the prevalence of child marriage*

Outcomes	Key Activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
Political, legal and budgetary reforms have been carried out and a framework for the elimination of child marriage has been created	**A1:** National Review of the status and gaps of the legal, policy and institutional frameworks on child marriage.	No. of laws revised at the national and regional level No. of new laws adopted at the national and regional level Existence of the legislative guide on the elimination of child marriage	New legal texts Legislative guide	ECOWAS, Member States	Short term
	A2: Ensure that old and new laws on addressing child marriage are popularized and implemented by Member States	Number of stakeholders (parliamentarians, traditional and religious leaders, CSOs) sensitized Number of countries that have adopted and populari-zed new legal provisions	Activity Report of sessions on the explanation and adoption	Member States (parliamentarians, traditional and religious leaders, CSOs, National Platforms, Regional Working Group on Child	Short term

Outcomes	Key Activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
		Number of sessions for explanation and adoption of the old and new laws drafted at the regional and national level No. of declaration of commitments by Heads of State and Leaders	Press releases	Protection- GRPE; West African Network of Young Female Leaders - ROAJELF, Grassroots communities)	
	A3: Identify / establish / strengthen existing institutional structures and mechanisms at all levels (regional, national and local) to eliminate child marriage	Mapping of structures and institutional mechanisms (profile, resources, results obtained) Number. of existing structures and mechanisms strengthened (technical and financial support)	Compendium of Structures and Institutional Mechanisms Technical and financial reports of the mechanisms	Institutional mechanisms Sector Ministries, ECOWAS, Technical and Financial Partners - TFP	Short term to Long Term
	A4: Strengthen the process of developing and implementing national action plans and the corresponding	Number of costed national action plans to end child marriage Number of Ministries involved Number of platforms created Number of active / involved platforms	Reports Sectorial action plans National Strategy to End Child Marriage	Platforms engaged in the elimination of child marriage Member States (Sector Ministries)	Short term

Outcomes	Key Activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
	budget to end child marriage by collaborating with sector ministries and all stakeholders	Number of sector ministries that have integrated the elimination of child marriage into their action plan			
	A5: Advocate to Member States Parliaments to prioritise child marriage and ensure adequate budget allocation	Gender analysis of the budget allocated to the fight against child marriage at national level and at all levels Existence of budget allocation for the elimination of child marriage in national budgets in coordination with the Ministries of Finance	Study report National budget documents	ECOWAS, CSOs, Platforms engaged in the elimination of child marriage	Short term
	A6: Monitor the implementation of relevant laws and policies that pertain to child marriage in Member States	Existence of a mechanism for monitoring the application of laws on child marriage Existence of application monitoring tools	Laws	Member States	Short term

Strategic Objective 2: *To ensure the inclusion and participation of children and young people in the fight against child marriage in all member states*

Outcomes	Key Activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
Organizational capacities of children, youth and youth groups are built and they are able to influence policymakers at all levels	**A1:** Mapping of skilled and potential youth influencers	Mapping of children and youth groups and young ambassadors at all levels (skills: profile, resources, results achieved)	Compendium of child and youth structures at all levels Technical and financial reports provided	Sector Ministries, ECOWAS, TFP	Short term
	A2: Engage with and support capacity building of children and the youth to promote leadership and their participation in key decision making processes about child marriage at national and regional levels	Number of children and youth groups and young ambassadors supported (technical and financial support) Existence of child-friendly training tools on regional and international laws on children's rights. Existence of advocacy plans for children and youth groups	Training Report Activity report	ECOWAS, Technical and Financial Partners (TFP) Member States CSOs, International Organizations	Medium term

Outcomes	Key Activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
		Number of meetings between Youth and children's organizations and government officials on the elimination of child marriage			
	A3: Pilot integrated approaches that involve children and youth in advancing the elimination of child marriage	Number of Youth and children's organizations are active members of the national platform Proportion of young people or youth organizations consulted in the development, Implementation and monitoring processes and of national action plans on the elimination of child marriage	Activity reports Meeting reports	ECOWAS, Technical and Financial Partners (TFP) Member States CSOs, International Organizations	Medium term
	A4: Promote the role of men and boys in ending child marriage	Number of groups and platforms working with boys and young men on the elimination of child marriage Number of boys who are champions of change in their community	Stakeholders Activity Reports	ECOWAS, Technical and Financial Partners (TFP) Member States CSOs, Private sector	Short and medium term

Outcomes	Key Activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
Community child protection mechanisms are strengthened and leaders as well as young people actively participate in their functioning	**A5:** Establish Community-based Child Protection Mechanisms (CBCPMs) and / or build capacity and allocate resources	Number of CBCPMs created and active Number of CBCPMs whose capacities have been built Number of communities that have access to prevention, response and reporting mechanisms	Training Reports Activity Reports	ECOWAS, Technical and Financial Partners (TFP) Member States CSOs, International Organizations	Short and Medium term
	A6: Promote leadership training, platform creation and networking and the active participation and leadership of youth and local leaders in CBCPMs	Number of leaders (type of leaders, gender) active in CBCPMs Number of CBCPMs members who are children and youth	Activity Report	ECOWAS, Technical and Financial Partners (TFP) Member States CSOs, International Organizations	Short and Medium term

Outcomes	Key Activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
	A7: Work with girls and boys through youth groups and schools to increase their knowledge, skills and confidence to use CBCPMs and report on child marriage risks Training for the youths, and formation of youth groups, ensuring the independence of youths	Number of schools working in collaboration with CBCPMs	Training Report Meeting report Activity Report	ECOWAS, Technical and Financial Partners (TFP) Member States CSOs, International Organization	Short and medium term

Strategic Objective 3: *To involve and engage traditional and religious leaders to become allies in the fight against child marriage and to take initiatives within their communities to eliminate child marriage*

Outcomes	Key activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
Traditional and religious leaders are engaged as allies and influence their peers in taking initiative against child marriage	**A1:** Identify and work with traditional and religious leaders who are allies in promoting children's rights	Cartography of traditional and religious leaders who are allies (profile, localities realized actions) Number of traditional and religious leaders supported (technical and financial support)	Compendium of traditional and religious leaders who are allies Activity and financial report	Member States CSOs, International Organizations	Short term
	A2: Engage champions and role models in traditional and religious structures to raise awareness about child marriage	Number of traditional leaders and religious leaders who have committed to eliminating child marriage Number of traditional and religious leaders involved in the development, implementation of the action plan on child marriage	Signed obligating documents Media reports Stakeholder Activity Reports	Member States CSOs, International Organizations	Short term

Outcomes	Key activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
		Number and type of actions carried out by traditional and religious leaders			
	A3: Support capacity building of traditional and religious leaders and their initiatives on ending child marriage	Number of Traditional Leaders and Religious Leaders with enhanced capacity to Influence Peers Number of leaders who benefitted from resources Number of cases of child marriage prevented by traditional and religious leaders	Stakeholder Activity Reports Media Reports	ECOWAS Member States CSOs International Organizations	Medium to long term
	A 4: Create opportunities for cross-country and cross regional learning amongst traditional and religious leaders including the role that they play in ending child marriage	Number of meetings to share experiences and knowledge	Stakeholder Activity Reports Media Reports	Member States CSO, International Organizations	Short to long term

Strategic objective 4: *To promote social behavioural change, awareness, and the use of communication and media to sensitise and amplify voices*

Outcomes	Key Activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
Community members, including youth, discuss and advocate for the rights of children and girls	**A1:** Organize community and intergenerational dialogues that include girls, boys, women and men to discuss issues related to child marriage (gender, sexuality, rights and duties of children etc.)	Number of intergenerational dialogues held Number of women and men that participated in the meetings Number of communities that organized dialogues.	Media Reports Stakeholder Activity Reports	ECOWAS Member States CSOs TFP International Organizations	Short term to long term
	A2: Create safe spaces for women and men and influential members of the community to discuss issues related to educational and family life	Number of communities where men and women discuss education and family life issues in safe spaces	Stakeholder Activity Reports	CSOs, TFP International Organizations	Short to long term
	A3: Capacity building for community-based structures to continue to inform and raise awareness about child marriage	Number and types of local structures sensitized	Stakeholder Activity Reports	ECOWAS CSOs TFP International Organizations	Short to long term

Outcomes	Key Activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
Traditional, social and popular media amplify the voice of girls and young women, share varied stories about their power and potential, and highlight alternatives to child marriage	**A4:** Collaborate with and Build the capacity of traditional social and popular media to communicate and support the social transformation needed to end child marriage	Number of stories related to child marriage that adopt a child rights approach, girls in particular Number and type of media with enhanced capabilities	Media reports Radio broadcasts TV shows Internet	CSOs, TFP International Organizations	Short to long term
	A5: Use media (traditional, social and popular) and storytelling techniques to highlight girls' voices and experiences and promote alternative lifestyles for girls	Number of stories written by a girl or a young woman Number of stories for which a girl or a woman was interviewed Number of stories that highlight alternatives to marriage for girls and young women and in which they choose when, with whom, and how to get married	Media reports Radio broadcasts TV shows Internet	CSOs TFP International Organizations	Short to long term
	A6: Promote Media engagement and collaboration for information, social transformation and to amplify voices	Number of multimedia awareness campaigns organized Number and type of media and actions organized	Stakeholder Activity Reports Media and social networks	ECOWAS CSOs, TFP International Organizations	Short to long term

Strategic Objective 5: *Promote access to formal and informal education, support services and economic opportunities to support the elimination of child marriage*

Outcomes	Key activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
Boys and girls have access to safe, inclusive, quality and free education until the age of 18	**A1:** Advocate for free and safe access to school for girls and boys, and that they stay in the formal or informal system until at least 18 years of age.	Number and types of organizations and individuals involved in advocacy Number of countries working with stakeholders to put in place an action plan for children's education	Stakeholder Activity Reports Media and social networks	ECOWAS CSOs, TFP International Organizations	Short to long term
	A2: Advocate for Member States to increase the budget allocated to education (public investment in educational infrastructure, especially more accessible and safe learning spaces, and staff training)	Percentage increase noted each fiscal year No. of countries where the budget for educational infrastructure and staff training has increased	State budgetary documents Stakeholder Activity Reports	Member States International Organizations and Civil Society Organizations	Short to long term

Outcomes	Key activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
	A3: Put in place mechanisms to support girls' schooling, especially in secondary education (promote safe schools and child protection mechanisms, building of boarding schools for girls, staff training, use of female teachers, supplies for school, etc.)	Number of schools that meet international standards for school safety Number of trained teachers Rate of increase in girls' enrollment Transition rate of girls from primary to secondary school Rate of completion disaggregated by gender Rate of increase in the number of female teachers	Statistical yearbooks, activity reports of sector ministries and stakeholders World Bank reports and national office statistics documents	Member States with the support of International Organizations and Civil Society Organizations	Short to long term
Children, youth, teachers and community members are informed and use child protection mechanisms	**A4:** Promote the integration of alternative schools into the formal educational system	No. of alternative schools that take steps to harmonize their curricula with national school curricula No. of Alternative Schools Taking Steps to Harmonize staff training programs with national training programs	Stakeholder Activity Reports	Member States, CSOs, Private Sector, Financial and Technical Partners	Short to Long term Short to long term

Outcomes	Key activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
	A5: Capacity building for school management structures and relevant community structures to identify children at risk of marriage and put in place prevention and support mechanisms (MCPE, School Management Committee, Parents Association, peer educator groups, etc.)	Number and types of structures whose capacities have been built No. of structures equipped to intervene and put in place prevention and support mechanisms in accordance with child protection standards Number of schools with child protection mechanisms, particularly reporting mechanisms for cases of abuse and sexual violence	Stakeholder Activity Reports Activity reports of the Ministry of Education	Member States FTP and International Organizations and Civil Society Organizations	Short to long term
	A6: Build the capacity of teachers and mentors on child protection, reporting mechanisms and family life education	No. of programs, projects and initiatives that integrate into the training of teachers and mentors family life education adapted to adolescents and young people Number of schools where there are mentorship programs that provide girls with information about their	Stakeholder Activity Reports Activity reports of the Ministry of Education	Member States (Ministry of Education and Health) TFP and International Organizations and Civil Society Organizations	Short to long term

Outcomes	Key activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
		bodies and about puberty and the risks of exploitation, abuse and sexual violence	Activity reports of the Ministry of Health		
	A7: Support young people and out-of-school children, especially young women, through life skills (including literacy) and economic opportunities	No. of programs, projects and initiatives that support young women's literacy and youth economic empowerment	Stakeholder Activity Reports	Member States, CSOs, Private Sector, Financial and Technical Partners	Short and long term
	A8: Promote the access of young women, including married and out-of-school young women to Savings and Loans mechanisms (Women's groups, Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), etc.)	Number of programs, projects and savings and credit initiatives that include young women Percentage of women and young women in programs, projects and savings and credit initiatives	Stakeholder Activity Reports	Member States, CSOs, Private Sector, Financial and Technical Partners	Short to long term

Strategic objective 6: *Support relevant sectoral systems to deliver quality and cost-effective services to meet the needs of victims of child marriage*

Results	Key activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
Adolescent girls are supported to enroll and remain in formal and non-formal education, especially through the transition from primary to secondary education	**A1:** Develop and implement operational guidelines, protocols and training modules for service providers to provide adolescent-friendly services for girls.	Number of adolescent girls in programme supported to access and remain in primary or lower-secondary school Number of adolescent girls (aged 10-18) actively participating in a life skills programme (with a particular emphasis on health information)	Member States reports ECOWAS database	ECOWAS Member Sates Civil Society Organizations	Short to medium term
Adolescent girls have access to quality and cost-effective services	**A2:** Line ministries adapt and implement guidelines, protocols, and standards for adolescent girl-friendly health services	Number and proportion of adolescent girls that have utilized health services in the previous 12 months Number and proportion of health facilities in programme areas implementing guidelines / policies for adolescent girl-friendly services	Member States reports ECOWAS database	ECOWAS and Member States	Short to medium term

Results	Key activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
deliver by relevant sectoral systems	A3: Promote and facilitate access to quality education for victims of child marriage	Percentage point difference in exam-pass rates between boys and girls in programme areas Number of non-formal / primary / secondary schools implementing interventions to improve the quality of education for adolescent girls			
	A4: Establish efficient tools for reporting cases of child violence, including child marriage	Functional child helplines in the Member States	Member States reports ECOWAS database	ECOWAS and Member States CSOs	Short and medium term
	A5: Establish and promote community based reporting mechanisms	Number of cases reported by community based mechanism		ECOWAS and Member States CSOs	Short and medium term
	A6: Establish and promote holistic approaches to victims of child marriage (Legal,	Number of victims who have received holistic assistance	Reports of Member States ECOWAS database	ECOWAS and Member States CSOs	Short and medium term

Results	Key activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
	psychosocial and economic) especially those in rural areas				
Victims of Child marriage specifically adolescent and young women will benefit from assistance for social and economic reintregation	**A7:** Facilitate access to scholarship opportunities for victims of child marriage	Number of countries that put in place a programme of scholarship Number of girls that have benefitted from scholarship	Reports of Member States ECOWAS Database	ECOWAS and Member States CSOs, TFP	Short and medium term

Strategic objective 7: *To put in place a strong monitoring, evaluation, reporting and community accountability mechanism that supports and reinforces an evidence-based performance improvement process for the implementation of the road map*

Results	Key activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
A reference document on the situation, trends and key issues relating to child marriage is produced	**A1:** Create a situational analysis of child marriage in the ECOWAS Region using credible data	Existence of reliable and up-to-date baseline data on child marriage and related issues in West Africa	Baseline study report	ECOWAS Member Sates Civil Society Organizations	Short term
The implementation of the road map is well coordinated and systematically on track	**A2:** Monitor the implementation of the road map through the establishment of a committee	- Existence of Regional and National Steering Committees - Profile and geographical spread of the committee membership - Number of meetings of the Steering Committee - Number of countries to improve their policies, laws and mechanisms on child marriage based on the sharing of best practices by other countries	- Signed MOU on the setting up of the Committee - TORs on the functioning modalities of the committee - Minutes of the committee's meetings Quarterly and Annual Reports	ECOWAS and Member States	Short term

Results	Key activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the implementation of the roadmap is institutionalised	**A3:** Put in place a monitoring and evaluation system (peer review) for the implementation of the roadmap	- Number of Peer Reviews - Existence of a functional monitoring and evaluation system	Report on the implementation of the road map	ECOWAS and Member States	Short to Long term
The performance of the various actors involved in the implementation of the road map is reviewed and timely interventions are carried out to address implementation challenges	**A4:** Carry out regular field monitoring missions	- Number of field monitoring missions carried out; - Number and quality of monitoring reports produced	Monitoring reports	ECOWAS Member States CSOs TFP	Short to Long Term
The implement-tation of the road map (progress, accomplishments, challenges, recommendations) are well documented	**A5:** Put in place a system for reporting on the implementation of the road map on a quarterly and annual basis	Number and quality of quarterly and annual reports produced	- Quarterly reports - Annual reports	ECOWAS Member States	Short to Long term

Results	Key activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
The progress and impact of the road map is effectively measured	**A6:** Carry out a mid-term review and a terminal evaluation of the road map	- Existence of mid-term review report - Existence of terminal evaluation report	Mid-term review and terminal evaluation reports	ECOWAS Member States Civil Society Organizations TFP	Short to Long term
Actors involved in the implementation of the road map are equipped with the skills and the capacity to carry out their roles effectively	**A7:** Support capacity building of implementing stakeholders	- Number of training sessions held - Number of implementing actors trained	Training and workshop reports	ECOWAS Member States Civil Society Organizations Technical and Financial Partners (TFP)	Short to Long term
Real time data on child marriage and related issues in West Africa is produced	**A8:** Establish a Member State M & E mechanism for national and sub-national monitoring and a child marriage information management system	- Existence of a functional database and information management system - No. of partnership agreements with statistical collection agencies Evidence of the effective use of the database and information system in the prevention of child marriage	Quarterly and annual reports	ECOWAS and Member States Technical and Financial Partners	Short to long term

Results	Key activities	Indicators	Sources of verification	Responsibilities	Duration
Measures to motivate Member States to strive towards ensuring that more effective child marriage policies, laws and mechanisms are put in place	**A9:** Create incentives for the implementation of the roadmap by all key stakeholders such as instituting an award scheme to reward countries, organizations, communities and individuals that distinguish themselves in the prevention of child marriage and related issues	Number of awards granted Number of girls saved from child marriage Number of articles in national and international media on the award scheme	Quarterly and Annual	ECOWAS Member States Civil Society Technical and Financial Partners	Short to long term

7.   INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT FOR IMPLEMENTATION

7.1   Guiding principles and best practices

The development, implementation, the Monitoring and Evaluation of the roadmap is based and guided by adherence to good practice and the principles outlined below.

i.   The principle of **partnership and consultation** aims at ensuring the permanent involvement of actors at all levels of the child protection sector and more particularly those who are engaged in the elimination of child marriage in planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

ii.   Partnerships can be articulated through: (i) contractual agreements defining actions over a specific period and budget (projects), (ii) joint advocacy campaigns, statements or press releases related to the implementation of the road map; (iii) inviting and participating in forums, platforms and networks to share experiences and lessons learned from the implementation of the roadmap; (iv) technical support to Member States and operational partners; and (v) Mobilization of joint resources. Partners include child protection actors such as child and youth-led organizations, the United Nations system, donors, international and national NGOs, community-based organizations, religious-based organizations, community-based organizations, and community-based organizations. private sector entities, social workers, academic and research institutions, civil society organizations and networks[lix].

iii.   **Mobilization and efficient allocation of resources and financial accountability:** Each resource mobilized for the implementation of this roadmap should be allocated appropriately on the basis of agreed actions. Establishment of functional mechanisms to monitor the level of planning, allocation and transparent use, as well as the assurance of financial accountability in the provision of prevention and response services to cases of proven child marriage cases are strongly desired.

iv.   **Reporting culture:** ECOWAS Commission applies its convening power to coordinate, monitor and supervise the implementation of the roadmap activities as well as the establishment of consensus on rules and standards at the regional level. This coordination function is an asset for reporting activities. It is desirable that guidelines, timelines and responsibilities for reporting activities be agreed with stakeholders.

v.   On the basis of the implementation of the roadmap on a ten (10) year temporary horizon and subdivided into three time frames - Short term - 0 to 3 years; Medium term - 4 to 6 years and Long term - 7 to 10 years; the reporting schedule of the roadmap is defined as follows: (i) Annual Reports

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[lix] ECOWAS (2017)

of Member States sent to ECOWAS in electronic format; (ii) 2022 - relative to the short-term maturity; (iii) 2026 - report at the end of the medium term; (iv) 2029 - report at the end of the long term.

vi.   The culture of reporting, sharing information with stakeholders and taking into account feedback should be strengthened to ensure informed decision-making by Heads of State in the context of prevention and response to proven cases of child marriage.

vii.   The principle of **inclusion** to ensure access to Education for All means ensuring that all children have access to basic education of good quality. This requires the creation of an environment in schools and basic education programs in which children are both capable and made capable of learning. Such an environment must be inclusive for children, efficient, friendly and welcoming. It must also be healthy, protective and sensitive to gender specificities. The development of child-friendly learning environments is an essential element of efforts by countries around the world to increase access to and improve the quality of their schools[lx].

viii.   The principle of **subsidiarity,** according to which we only treat at the regional level what cannot be better treated at national and local level. This principle implies, among other things, that national or local jurisdiction is the rule, regional (Community) competence, the exception.

ix.   The principle of **regionality** according to which the community (ECOWAS) only deals with issues that concern at least two Member States.

x.   The principle of solidarity, according to which the Community guarantees a minimum of cohesion between its members and pools a set of financial, human and institutional resources in order to reduce the disparities that exist between them.

xi.   The principle of **progressivity** implies a gradual approach to take account of national situations and special interests.

7.2   Overall view of the governance

In general, the institutional framework would be structured around the following aspects:

i.   **The ECOWAS Commission** shall in the exercise of its convening power work to build consensus among Member States around acceptable regional norms and standards. The Commission is responsible for monitoring and supervision as well as the coordination of activities to ensure the implementation of the roadmap.

ii.   **Member States of ECOWAS**: Member States ensure their responsibility as provided for in the road map.

[lx] UNESCO (2006)

iii. **Development Partners including the Regional Child Protection Working Group (RCPWG)** and other stakeholders working to end child marriage will collaborate with the ECOWAS Commission in fulfillment of its roles; as well as contribute to the much needed technical support to Member States in Implementation of the roadmap. They shall also support the Member States' resource mobilization efforts in collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission

iv. **High Level Personalities:** The implementation, monitoring and evaluation system will give pride of place to high level personalities and champions working on ending child marriage such as the ECOWAS Member States' First Ladies. Indeed, the First Ladies are already engaged in the process. Thus, their involvement in preventing and responding to child marriage cases will be an integral part of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation framework of this roadmap.

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ANNEX

THEORY OF CHANGE ON ECOWAS ROAD MAP ON PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO CHILD MARRIAGE
(SEQUENTIAL FROM BOTTOM AS FOLLOWS: PROBLEMS-STRATEGIES-KEY INTERVENTIONS-ACTIVTIES-OUTCOME-LONG TERM IMPACT)

LONG TERM IMPACT:

An ECOWAS region without child marriage, where girls and boys have
equal opportunities and can reach their full potentials in all aspect of their lives

OUTCOMES

ECOWAS MEMBERS STATES LAWS AND POLICIES ARE ALIGNED WITH INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL STANDARS AND COMMTMENTS. ALL MEMBER STATES ENACT AND ENFORCE LAWS AND POLICIES THAT PROHIBIT CHILD MARRIAGE ESTABLISH, IMPLEMENT AND STRENGTHEN CIVIL REGISTRATION FOR BIRTH AND MARRIAGE	ALL CATEGORIS OF THE SOCIETY FULLY MOBILIZED AND ENGAGED IN EFFORTS TO END CHILD MARRIAGE. COMMUNITY, TRADITIONAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS FULLY AWARE OF HARMFUL EFFECTS OF MARRIAGE MEDIA ENGAGEMENT FOR SENSITIZATION, MOBILZATION TO SUPPORT NORMATIVE CHANGES TO END CHILD MARRIAGE	INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN EFFORTS TO END CHILD MARRIAGE YOUNG GIRLS ARE EMPOWERED TO KNOW THEIER RIGHTS AND TO VALUE ALTERNATIVES TO CHILD MARRIAGE	FULL INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN EFFORTS TO END CHILD MARRIAGE	INCREASED ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION IN A SAFE, INSPIRING ENVIRONMENT IMPROVEMENT IN LEARNING OUTCOMES AND QUALITY OF TEACHERS POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES AND INCENTIVES FOR GIRLS RETENTION IN SCHOOLS	COORDINATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION NATIONAL PEER REVIEW SYSTEM ANNUAL REPORT ON ACTIVITIES TO END CHILD MARRIAGE

ACTIVITIES

NATIONAL REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF THE LEGAL, POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF DIFFERENT MEMBER STATES ON CHILD MARRIAGE DEVELOP A MODEL LAW/LEGISLATION GUIDE ON ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE FOR ALL MEMBER STATES TO ADOPT ADVOCACY WITH MEMBER STATE PARLIAMENTS	TRAIN AND EMPOWER (CHILDREN, YOUTH, MEN, WOMEN, PARENTS, TRADITIONAL, RELIGIOUS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS) TO IMPROVE THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS ON THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD MARRIAGE ENGAGE TRADITIONAL AND NEW MEDIA INFLUENCERS TO CHAMPION AND AMPLIFY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD MARRIAGE IN SOCIETY CREATE AWARENESS ABOUT THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF CHILD MARRIAGE INCLUDING INFLUENCERS LIKE SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS	ENGAGING CHILDREN AND YOUTH LED ORGANISATIONS IN BOTH FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL SETTINGS PILOT INTEGRATED APPROACHES THAT INVOLVES CHILDREN AND YOUTH TO ELIMINATE CHILD MARRIAGE MAINSTREAM ELIMINATION OF CHILD MARRIAGE INTO STATE SUPPORTED YOUTH INITIATIVES DEVELOP PEER EDUCATOR PROGRAMS FOR IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTHS INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN PARLIAMENT IN ADVOCACY TO END CHILD MARRIAGE	ADVOCACY WITH COMMUNITY GATE KEEPERS ENGAGE CHAMPIONS OR ROLE MODELS IN TRADITIONAL AND RELIGIOUS STRUCTURES TO END CHILD MARRIAGE	ADVOCACY FOR FUNCTIONAL AND AFFORDABLE EDUCATIONAL AT THE BASIC LEVEL: WASH SYSTEM, HYGIENE, SCHOOL FEEDING, REMOVING BARRIERS TO UNIVERSAL FREE EDUCATION SUCH AS ANCILLIARY PAYMENT FOR UNIFORM, DEVELOPMENT LEVY, ADVOCACY FOR QUALITY TEACHERS, QUALITY EDUCATION AND HIGH EDUCATION ATTAINMENT EMPOWER TEACHERS TO REPORT CASES OF CHILD MARRIAGE THROUGH INCENTIVES ADVOCACY TO EXTEND THE FREE BASIC EDUCATION TO BE EXTENDED TO THE END OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL	ADVOCACY FOR FUNCTIONAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS ON ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE AT ALL LEVELS; COMMUNITY, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS BUILD CAPACITY OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS PERSONNEL CONDUCT REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PEER REVIEWS

KEY INTERVENTIONS

ESTABLISH IMPLEMENT AND ENFORCES LAWS AND POLICIES TOWARDS ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE	SOCIAL BEHAVIORAL CHANGE, COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA	INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH	INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS	EDUCATION, SUPPORT SERVICES, INNOVATION AND INCENTIVES	COORDINATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

STRATEGIES

IMPROVE LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK	COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND ENGAGEMENT	INCREASED ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

PROBLEM:

PERSISTENCE OF CHILD MARRIAGE, WHICH IS A HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION THAT NEGATIVELY IMPACTS EVERY ASPECT OF THE CHILD'S LIFE, COMMUNITY, COUNTRY AND REGION, AND THE PRACTISE IS ROOTED IN GENDER INEQUALITIES, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS NORMS THAT EXACERBATED BY POVERTY, LOW LEVEL OF EDUCATION, HUMANITARIAN CRISIS AND CONFLICT SITUATIONS.

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