



Press Release

Consensus Conference for the National Action Plan for prevention of early and child marriage

Kabul, 05 September, 2016. Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs and Ministry of Women Affairs, with the Technical Support of UNFPA organized a One-Day consensus-building workshop for the endorsement of the National Action Plan for Elimination of Early and Child Marriage in Afghanistan. The workshop took place at the GIMC.

The workshop brought together stakeholders from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, including; Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Women's Affairs and Ministry of Education along with other key actors from Sister UN Agencies and national and international partners.

The workshop aimed to consult experts from different government entities and key players to finalize the National Action Plan for Elimination of Early and Child Marriage practices in Afghanistan. The workshop also aimed to mobilize support for the implementation of National Action Plan in the country.

“An assemblage of different harmful practices and family structure, cultural and economic factors influence the decision of parents in a family to determine whether or not a girl marries at a young age, without the girl being part of the very decision that will change her life”, said Dr Mateen Shaheen the Officer-in-Charge for UNFPA Country Representative. “However, the adverse effects of child marriage on girls are inevitable. Early and child marriage robs a girl her childhood and denies her right to education and having a healthy live”, added Dr Shaheen.

According to the State of the World Population Report 2012, child marriage is a global issue, while the practice is most prevalent in South Asia, where 46 percent of women aged 20–24 years were married or entered a union by age 18. According to the 2014 version of the same, as a result of early and child marriage or early union across developing countries, every day, 39,000 girls become child brides—or about 140 million in a decade.

According to the Central Statistics Organization of Afghanistan, 17.3 percent of girls aged 15–19 and 66.2 percent of girls aged 20–24 are married. The Afghanistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (AMICS) 2010–2011, found that 15.2 percent of surveyed women were married before the age of 15 and 46.4 percent before 18.

Early and child marriage pulls girls out of school. This practice makes sure that poverty is handed down from mother to daughter and from family to family, for generations to come. Early and child marriage as much as it is an economical issue, it is also a health issue. In Afghanistan, among 100,000 live births 327 mothers die of pregnancy related complications, and among mothers between the ages of 15-19 the ratio is 531 deaths. This data puts early and child marriage at the centre of fight against maternal mortality.

The second stage that will be resumed after obtaining the validation of the National Action Plan, will entail UN Agencies to work in partnership with key stakeholders to leverage funding and resources to start the implementation of the action plan in accordance with the key strategic priority areas identified in the document.