

Headline	Counting cost of child brides		
MediaTitle	New Sunday Times		
Date	14 Oct 2012	Color	Full Color
Section	World	Circulation	156,910
Page No	I-49	Readership	295,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	475 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 15,497
Frequency	Weekly	PR Value	RM 46,491



Counting cost of child brides

INVEST IN DAUGHTERS:

UN urges govts to act as up to 14m girls under 18 marry each year

MORE than 14 million girls under the age of 18 will be married each year during the next decade, and the number could increase to more than 15 million between 2021 and 2030, a new report from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) showed.

As the number of young married females grows, the number of children bearing children will increase, along with deaths among girls, it added.

Child marriage is a violation of fundamental human rights, according to international conventions. Early marriage often leads to early departure from school, economic dependency and difficulty finding work outside the home.

It can also perpetuate poverty

and increase susceptibility to sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS.

"In those communities where the practice of child marriage remains common, families can feel it's not worth investing at all in the education of their daughters," said Babatunde Osotimehin, UNFPA executive director.

Osotimehin, who last month launched a global campaign urging countries to invest in the education of women and young people, said uneducated girls were more than three times likely to marry before age 18 than those with secondary education or higher.

"No country can afford the lost opportunity, waste of talent or personal exploitation that child marriage causes," she added in an interview with TrustLaw, a website covering women's rights and good governance run by the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

In 2010, 158 countries reported that 18 was the minimum legal age for girls to marry without parental consent. But in 146 countries, girls younger than 18 could marry with

the consent of parents, and in 52 nations the age is under 15.

In 41 countries 30 per cent or more of women 20-24 years old had married by 18, with Niger topping the list at 75 per cent.

The report said as the 2015 deadline for meeting the UN Millennium Development Goals draws near, governments should recognise that tackling child marriage will help meet at least six of the eight anti-poverty targets.

Child marriage hinders gender equality and empowering women.

Young brides are often married to men who are much older and, even if they are aware of their rights, cannot claim them.

It also limits progress towards eradicating extreme poverty, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS and achieving universal primary education.

"The implications are staggering and demand swift action," according to the report, which showed that most child marriages occur in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. **Reuters**



Pregnant teenagers queuing for a free pre-natal check-up during a medical mission for teenage pregnancy conducted by the United Nations Population Fund in the slum community of Vitas in Tondo, Manila. Reuters pic